THE

VILLAGE MINSTREL,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY JOHN CLARE,

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PEASANT;

AUTHOR OF "POEMS ON RURAL LIFE AND SCENERY."

"I never list presume to Parnasse Hill,
But piping low, in shade of lowly grove,
I play to please myself."
Spenser's Shep. Kal.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS.

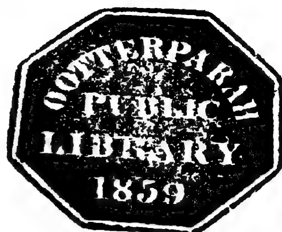
VOL. II.

CONTENTS.

SONNETS.

CONTENTS.

POEMS.



ROSY JANE.

The eve put on her sweetest shroud,
    The summer-dress she's often in,
Freck'd with white and purple cloud,
    Dappled like a leopard's skin;
The martin, by the cotter's shed,
    Had welcom'd eve with twittering song;
The blackbird sang the sun to bed,
    Old Oxey's briery dells among:

When o'er the field tript rosy Jane,
    Fair as the flowers she treaded on;
But she was gloomy for her swain,
    Who long to fight the French had gone;

She milk'd, and sang her mournful song,
As, how an absent maid did moan,
Who for a soldier sorrowed long,
That went and left her, like her own.

Though dreadful drums had ceas'd their noise,
And peace proclaim'd returning Joe,
Delays so lingering dampt her joys,
And expectation nettled woe:
Hope, mix'd with fear and doubts the while,
Look'd for his coming every hour;
As one, when spring begins to smile,
Awaits the early opening flower.

With doubtful eyes we view the bud;
Though sweet the sun smiles on it then,
A blighting storm may tear the wood,
And blast our promises again:

With soldiers, danger's always near;
Poor Jane had deepest cause to sigh;—
To-day, peace smiles with little fear,
The next, war bursts, and Joe may die.

Each morn, from window of her cot,
Adown the road she strain'd her eye;
Each eve she wander'd to the spot
Where Joe had bid his last "Good bye;"
Where love had breath'd its last, last vow,
Where each their keep-sake trifles gave;
His prov'd love warm'd her bosom now,—
"This will I carry to my grave."

So said he, looking on the box
With poesy on the lid bespread;
So said he, while the curling locks
Her own hand sever'd from her head;

While she wip'd off the tear-drops free
    With 'kerchief marked with his name,
And vow'd his ribbon then should be
    Her Sunday head-dress till he came.

Thus Jenny's heart was drooping sad ;
    Her hopes and fears were then at strife,
Lest false should prove her soldier-lad,
    And home return with foreign wife :
Yet the last oath her love had ta'en
    Would hearten up her soul awhile,—
" Should war return me safe to Jane,
    No maid on earth shall me beguile."

Thus Jane sat milking, full of thought,
    As doubtful how the case might prove ;
—' Luck comes unlook'd for and unsought,'
    So gossips say of wealth and love :

How true their wisdom turneth out,
How oft fulfill'd we little know;
But Jane proves once, without a doubt,
What dames oft told to soothe her woe.

Old Joe the woodman, with his kid,
Went home as warn'd the setting sun;
And stand and rest he often did,
To talk with Jane about his son:
True to his sunset-clock he kept,
His Goody and his cot to find,
When strange to say, with strutting step,
To-night a soldier skipt behind.

His jacket shone so red, so gay
His feather o'er his cap did hing,
And in the fine genteelly way
He'd learn'd his ribbon'd cane to swing:

Unus'd to see the flashing sight,
    The startled thrush broke off her strain;
The sheep forgot their grass to bite,
    And stared up at the passing swain.

Jane's 'skewing cow was struck with fear,
    And kick'd the milkpail on the ground,
Which made her shed another tear,
    To think she nought but sorrow found;
But woodman Joe revers'd the plan,
    And bawl'd, "My wench, ne'er mind your fall:
Dry up your tears; I bring the man
    Shall hide your loss, and pay for all."

Ah, sure enough, 'twas him she wist;
    She 'member'd well the face of Joe,
And almost swooned while he kiss'd,
    So sudden pleasure banish'd woe:

" My Jane," he cried, " thy tears dry up;"
His heart with love was beating warm,
He took the empty milkpail up,
And led her homeward on his arm.

Old Joe stumpt 'hind them on the road,
Heart-lighten'd from war-breeding woes,
And when the son begg'd take his load,
He said the sticks would spoil his clothes:
Since he so happy went from toil,
'Twas many a long and weary day;
And, stumping on, would often smile,
To think what dame at home would say.

The swain was busied all the way
To tell his Jane of all he'd seen,
And talk about the parting day,
When last they met upon the green;

And show the 'bacco box the while,
And to the parting vow refer,
And hint, when absent many a mile,
How such things made him think of her.

And still her lock of hair he'd got,
And near his heart the prize possess'd ;
But Jenny's wonder knew it not,
Weav'd in a brooch upon his breast:
His wisdom fill'd her with surprise,
Since he had left his ploughs and carts ;
She thought, than home-bred louts, how wise
The people were in foreign parts.

Ere half-way home Joe had her led,
With eager speed each passing swain
The news around the village spread,
" Jane's sweetheart Joe's return'd again!"

Old Goody stopt her wheel, and smil'd,
And sought her cloke 'tween joy and pain,
And took her stick, to meet her child
She little hoped to see again.

Ah, come and gone were many years
Since Joe with soldiers took his quart,
And laugh'd to scorn his mother's tears,—
That thorny thought still prick'd his heart:
Poor tottering soul, her head was grey,
And grief and age had wrink'd her brow,
So alter'd since his parting day,
He hardly knew his mother now.

But tear-drops ready stood to start
At whispering nature's warm command,
"O, here's my mother!" leapt his heart—
He instant grasp'd her trembling hand:

O'ercome with joy, " My boy!" she said,
    And on his propping arm reclin'd,
" Death now may come without a dread,
    I've found the all I wish'd to find."

That night around the cottage hearth
    Did meet the friends of maid and swain,
And every heart was fill'd with mirth,
    And blest I ween were Joe and Jane:
Though Joe's old folks did lowly prove,
    And Jane's could boast cows, ploughs, and carts,
They said they'd ne'er control her love,
    But wish'd them joy with all their hearts.

Joe told the wonders that he knew,
    And all the dangers of the wars;
And then, to prove his story true,
    Unbrac'd his coat to show his scars:

The old folks saw, and blest their child;
Each drank to the intended bride,
And brought her milk-loss up, and smil'd,
And wish'd no worse luck might betide.

Next day being Sunday, folks believ'd
They would be ask'd at church that day;
But Joe the gossips' thoughts deceiv'd,
And brought it in a nearer way:
He long ago did ring provide,
And wealth in dangerous wars had ta'en,
So he with licence bought his bride,
And crown'd the bliss of rosy Jane.

CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS.

"Perhaps it is foolish to remark it, but there are times and places when I am a child at those things" MACKENZIE.

EACH scene of youth to me's a pleasing toy,
  Which memory, like a lover, doats upon;
And mix'd with them I am again a boy,
  With tears and sighs regretting pleasures gone.

Ah! with enthusiast excesses wild
  The scenes of childhood meet my moist'ning eye,
And with the very weakness of a child
  I feel the raptures of delights gone by.

And still I fancy, as around I stroll
    Each boyish scene, to mark the sport and game,
Others are living with a self-like soul,
    That think, and love such trifles, just the same.

An old familiar spot I witness here,
    With young companions where we oft have met:
Tho' since we play'd 'tis bleach'd with many a year,
    The sports as warmly thrill my bosom yet.

Here winds the dyke where oft we jump'd across,
    'Tis just as if it were but yesternight;
There hangs the gate we call'd our wooden horse,
    Where we in see-saw ridings took delight.

And every thing shines round me just as then,
    Mole-hills, and trees, and bushes speckling wild,
That freshen all those pastimes up agen—
    O grievous day that chang'd me from a child!

To seek the plaything and the pleasing toy,
The painted pooty-shell and summer-flowers,
How blest was I when I was here a boy;
What joys were mine in those delightful hours!

On this same bank I bound my posies up,
And cull'd the sweetest blossoms one by one;
The cowslips still entice me down to stoop,
But all the feelings they inspir'd are gone.

Though in the midst of each endear'd delight,
Where still the cowslips to the breezes bow,
Though all my childish scenes are in my sight,
Sad manhood marks me an intruder now.

Here runs the brook which I have damm'd and stopt
With choking sods, and water-weeds, and stones,
And watch'd with joy till bursting off it plopt,
In rushing gushes of wild murmuring groans.

Here stands the tree with clasping ivy bound,
Which oft I've climb'd, to see the men at plough,
And checquer'd fields for many a furlong round,
Rock'd by the winds upon its topmost bough.

Ah, on this bank how happy have I felt,
When here I sat and mutter'd nameless songs,
And with the shepherd-boy, and neatherd, knelt
Upon yon rush-beds, plaiting whips and thongs.

Fond memory warms, as here with gravel-shells
I pil'd my fancied cots and walled rings,
And scoop'd with wooden knife my little wells,
And fill'd them up with water from the springs.

Ah, memory sighs, now hope my heart beguiles
To build as yet snug cots to cheer despair,
While fate at distance mocks with grinning smiles,
And calls my structures "castles in the air."

Now e'en the thistles quaking in the wind,
    The very rushes nodding o'er the green,
Hold each expressive language to my mind,
    And, like old comrades, tell of what has been.

O "sweet of sweets" from infancy that flow,
    When can we witness bliss so sweet as then?
Might I but have my choice of joy below,
    I'd only ask to be a boy agen.

Life owns no joy so pleasant as the past,
    That banish'd pleasure, wrapt in memory's womb:
It leaves a flavour sweet to every taste,
    Like the sweet substance of the honey-comb.

SONG.

A BEAUTIFUL flower, that bedeck'd a mean pasture,
In virgin perfection I found;
Its fair bloom stood naked to every disaster,
And deep the storm gather'd around:
The rose in the midst of its brambles is blooming,
Whose weapons intruders alarm,
But sweetest of blossoms, fond, fair, and weak woman
Has nothing to guard her from harm.

Each stranger seem'd struck with a blossom so lovely,
In such a lone valley that grew;
The clown's admiration was cast on it roughly,
While blushing it shrank from his view:

O sweet was the eve when I found the fair blossom,
Sure never seem'd blossom so fair,
I instant transplanted its charms to my bosom,
And deep has the root gather'd there.

THE WOODMAN.

DEDICATED TO THE REV. J. KNOWLES HOLLAND.

The beating snow-clad bell, with sounding dead,
Hath clanked four—the woodman's wak'd again;
And, as he leaves his comfortable bed,
Dithers to view the rimy feather'd pane,
And shrugs, and wishes—but 'tis all in vain:
The bed's warm comforts he must now forego;
His family that oft till eight hath lain,
Without his labour's wage could not do so,
And glad to make them blest he shuffles through
the snow.

The early winter's morn is dark as pitch,
The wary wife from tinder brought at night,
With flint and steel, and many a sturdy twitch,
Sits up in bed to strike her man a light;
And as the candle shows the rapturous sight,
Aside his wife his rosy sleeping boy,
He smacks his lips with exquisite delight,
With all a father's feelings, father's joy,
Then bids his wife good-bye, and hies to his employ.

His breakfast water-porridge, humble food;
A barley crust he in his wallet flings;
On this he toils and labours in the wood,
And chops his faggot, twists his band, and sings,
As happily as princes and as kings
With all their luxury:—and blest is he,
Can but the little which his labour brings
Make both ends meet, and from long debts keep free,
And neat and clean preserve his numerous family.

Far o'er the dreary fields the woodland lies,
Rough is the journey which he daily goes;
The woolly clouds, that hang the frowning skies,
Keep winnowing down their drifting sleet and
snows,
And thro' his doublet keen the north wind blows;
While hard as iron the cemented ground,
And smooth as glass the glibbed pool is froze;
His nailed boots with clenching tread rebound,
And dithering echo starts, and mocks the clamping
sound.

The woods how gloomy in a winter's morn!
The crows and ravens even cease to croak,
The little birds sit chittering on the thorn,
The pies scarce chatter when they leave the oak,
Startled from slumber by the woodman's stroke;
The milk-maid's song is drown'd in gloomy care,
And, while the village chimneys curl their smoke,
She milks, and blows, and hastens to be there;
And nature all seems sad, and dying in despair.

The quirking rabbit scarcely leaves her hole,
But rolls in torpid slumbers all the day;
The fox is loth to 'gin a long patrole,
And scouts the woods, content with meaner prey;
The hare so frisking, timid once, and gay,
'Hind the dead thistle hurkles from the view,
Nor scarce is scar'd though in the traveller's way,
Though waffling curs and shepherd-dogs pursue;
So winter's rugged power affects all nature through.

What different changes winter's frowns supply:
The clown no more a loitering hour beguiles,
Nor gaping tracks the clouds along the sky,
As when buds blossom, and the warm sun smiles,
And "Lawrence wages bids" on hills and stiles;
Banks, stiles, and flowers, and skies,-no longer charm;
Deep drifting snow each summer-seat defiles;
With hasty blundering step and folded arm
He glad the stable seeks, his frost-nipt nose to warm.

The shepherd haunts no more his spreading oak,
Nor on the sloping pond-head lies at lair;
The arbour he once wattled up is broke,
And left unworthy of his future care;
The ragged plundering stickers have been there,
And pilfer'd it away: he passes by
His summer dwelling, desolate and bare,
And ne'er so much as turns a conscious eye,
But gladly seeks his fire, and shuns th' inclement sky.

The scene is cloth'd in snow from morn till night,
The woodman's loth his chilly tools to seize;
The crows, unroosting as he comes in sight,
Shake down the feathery burden from the trees;
To look at things around he's fit to freeze:
Scar'd from her perch the fluttering pheasant flies;
His hat and doublet whiten by degrees,
He quakes, looks round, and pats his hands and
sighs,
And wishes to himself that the warm sun would rise.

The robin, tamest of the feather'd race,
Soon as he hears the woodman's sounding chops,
With ruddy bosom and a simple face
Around his old companion fearless hops,
And there for hours in pleas'd attention stops:
The woodman's heart is tender and humane,
And at his meals he many a crumble drops.
Thanks to thy generous feelings, gentle swain;
And what thy pity gives, shall not be given in vain.

The woodman gladly views the closing day,
To see the sun drop down behind the wood,
Sinking in clouds deep blue or misty grey,
Round as a foot-ball and as red as blood:
The pleasing prospect does his heart much good,
Though 'tis not his such beauties to admire;
He hastes to fill his bags with billet-wood,
Well-pleas'd from the chill prospect to retire,
To seek his corner chair, and warm snug cottage fire.

And soon as dusky even hovers round,
And the white frost 'gins crizzle pond and brook,
The little family are glimpsing round,
And from the door dart many a wistful look;
The supper's ready stewing on the hook:
And every foot that clampers down the street
Is for the coming father's step mistook;
O'erjoy'd are they when he their eyes does meet,
Bent 'neath his load, snow-clad, as white as any sheet.

I think I see him seated in his chair,
Taking the bellows up the fire to blow;
I think I hear him joke and chatter there,
Telling his children news they wish to know;
With leather leggings on, that stopt the snow,
And broad-brimm'd hat uncouthly shapen round:
Nor would he, I'll be bound, if it were so,
Give twopence for the chance, could it be found,
At that same hour to be the king of England crown'd.

The woodman smokes, the brats in mirth and glee,
And artless prattle, even's hours beguile,
While love's last pledge runs scrambling up his
knee,
The nightly comfort from his weary toil,
His chuff cheeks dimpling in a fondling smile;
He claims his kiss, and says his scraps of prayer;
Begging his daddy's pretty song the while,
Playing with his jacket-buttons and his hair;—
And thus in wedlock's joys the labourer drowns his
care.

And as most labourers knowingly pretend
By certain signs to judge the weather right,
As oft from "Noah's ark" great floods descend,
And "buried moons" foretel great storms at night,
In such-like things the woodman took delight;
And ere he went to bed would always ken
Whether the sky was gloom'd or stars shone bright,
Then went to comfort's arms till morn, and then
As cheery as the sun resum'd his toils agen.

And ere he slept he always breath'd a prayer,
"I thank thee, Lord, that thou to-day didst give
Sufficient strength to toil; and bless thy care,
And thank thee still for what I may receive:
And, O Almighty God! while I still live,
Ere my eyes open on the last day's sun,
Prepare thou me this wicked world to leave,
And fit my passage ere my race is run;
'Tis all I beg, O Lord! thy heavenly will be done."

Holland! to thee this humble ballad's sent,
Who for the poor man's welfare oft hast pray'd;
Whose tongue did ne'er belie its good intent,
Preacher, as well in practice, as in trade—
Alas, too often money's business made!
O may the wretch, that's still in darkness living,
The Bible's comforts hear by thee display'd;
And many a woodman's family, forgiven,
Have cause for blessing thee that led their way to
heaven.

IMPROMPTU.

"Where art thou wandering, little child?"
I said to one I met to-day—
She push'd her bonnet up and smil'd,
"I'm going upon the green to play:
Folks tell me that the May's in flower,
That cowslip-peeps are fit to pull,
And I've got leave to spend an hour
To get this little basket full."

—And thou'st got leave to spend an hour!
My heart repeated—she was gone;
—And thou hast heard the thorn's in flower,
And childhood's bliss is urging on:

Ah, happy child! thou mak'st me sigh,
This once as happy heart of mine,
Would nature with the boon comply,
How gladly would I change for thine.

RECOLLECTIONS AFTER AN EVENING WALK.

Just as the even-bell rang, we set out
To wander the fields and the meadows about;
And the first thing we mark'd that was lovely to view,
Was the sun hung on nothing, just bidding adieu:
He seem'd like a ball of pure gold in the west,
In a cloud like a mountain blue, dropping to rest;
The skies all around him were ting'd with his rays,
And the trees at a distance seem'd all on a blaze,

Till, lower and lower, he sank from our sight,
And the blue mist came creeping with silence and
night.
The woodman then ceas'd with his hatchet to hack,
And bent away home with his kid on his back;
The mower too lapt up his scythe from our sight,
And put on his jacket, and bid us good-night;
The thresher once lumping, we heard him no more,
He left his barn-dust, and had shut up his door;
The shepherd had told all his sheep in his pen,
And humming his song, sought his cottage agen:
But the sweetest of all seeming music to me,
Were the songs of the clumsy brown-beetle and bee;
The one was seen hast'ning away to his hive,
The other was just from his sleeping alive,—
'Gainst our hats he kept knocking as if he'd no eyes,
And when batter'd down he was puzzled to rise.
The little gay moth too was lovely to view,
A dancing with lily-white wings in the dew;

He whisk'd o'er the water-pudge flirting and airy,
And perch'd on the down-headed grass like a fairy.
And there came the snail from his shell peeping out,
As fearful and cautious as thieves on the rout;
The sly jumping frog too had ventur'd to tramp,
And the glow-worm had just 'gun to light up his
lamp;
To sip of the dew the worm peep'd from his den,
But dreading our footsteps soon vanish'd agen:
And numbers of creatures appear'd in our sight,
That live in the silence and sweetness of night,
Climbing up the tall grasses or scaling the bough,
But these were all nameless, unnotic'd till now.
And then we wound round 'neath the brook's willow
row,
And look'd at the clouds that kept passing below;
The moon's image too, in the brook we could see't,
As if 'twas the other world under our feet;
And we listen'd well pleas'd at the guggles and groans
The water made passing the pebbles and stones.

And then we turn'd up by the rut-rifted lane,
And sought for our cot and the village again;
For night gather'd round, and shut all from the eye,
And a black sultry cloud crept all over the sky;
The dew on the bush, soon as touch'd it would drop,
And the grass 'neath our feet was as wet as a mop:
And, as to the town we approach'd very fast,
The bat even popp'd in our face as he past;
And the crickets sang loud as we went by the house,
And by the barn-side we saw many a mouse
Quirking round for the kernels that, litter'd about,
Were shook from the straw which the thresher hurl'd out.

And then we came up to our cottage once more,
And shut out the night-dew, and lock'd up the door;
The dog bark'd a welcome, well-pleas'd at our sight,
And the owl o'er our cot flew, and whoop'd a "good-night."

BALLAD.

WINTER'S gone, the summer breezes
    Breathe the shepherd's joys again,
Village scene no longer pleases,
    Pleasures meet upon the plain;
Snows are fled that hung the bowers,
    Buds to blossoms softly steal,
Winter's rudeness melts in flowers:—
    Charmer, leave thy spinning wheel,
        And tend the sheep with me.

Careless here shall pleasures lull thee,
    From domestic troubles free;
Rushes for thy couch I'll pull thee,
    In the shade thy seat shall be;

All the flower-buds will I get
    Spring's first sunbeams do unseal,
Primrose, cowslip, violet :—
    Charmer, leave thy spinning wheel,
        And tend the sheep with me.

Cast away thy " twilly willy,"
    Winter's warm protecting gown,
Storms no longer blow to chill thee ;
    Come with mantle loosely thrown,
Garments, light as gale's embraces,
    That thy lovely shape reveal;
Put thou on thy airy dresses :—
    Charmer, leave thy spinning wheel,
        And tend the sheep with me.

Sweet to sit where brooks are flowing,
    Pleasant spreads the gentle heat,
On the green's lap thyme is growing,
    Every molehill forms a seat :

Fear not suns 'cause thou'rt so fair,
    In the thorn-bower we'll conceal;
Ne'er a sunbeam pierces there :—
    Charmer, leave thy spinning wheel,
        And tend the sheep with me.

A SIGH, IN A PLAY-GROUND.

O HAPPY spot! how much the sight of thee
Wakes the endearments of my infancy:
The very trees, through which the wild-winds sigh,
Seem whispering now some joys of youth gone by;
And each spot round, so sacred to my sight,
Hints at some former moment of delight.
Each object there still warmly seems to claim
Tender remembrance of some childish game;
Still on the slabs, before yon door that lie,
The top seems spinning, in fond memory's eye;

And fancy's echo still yon field resounds
With noise of blind-man's buff, and fox-and-hounds.
Ah, as left rotting 'neath its mossy crown
The pile stands sacred o'er some past renown,
So thou, dear spot, though doubtless but to me,
Art sacred from the joys possess'd in thee,
That rose, and shone, and set—a sun's sojourn ;
As quick in speed,—alas, without return !

NARRATIVE VERSES,

WRITTEN AFTER AN EXCURSION FROM HELPSTONE TO BURGHLEY PARK.

The faint sun tipt the rising ground,
No blustering wind, the air was still ;
The blue mist, thinly scatter'd round,
Verg'd along the distant hill :

Delightful morn! from labour free
    I jocund met the south-west gale,
While here and there a busy bee
    Humm'd sweetly o'er the flow'ry vale.

O joyful morn! on pleasure bent,
    Down the green slopes and fields I flew;
And through the thickest covert went,
    Which hid me from the public view:
Nor was it shame, nor was it fear,
    No, no, it was my own dear choice;
I love the briary thicket, where
    Echo keeps her mocking voice.

The sun's increasing heat was kind,
    His warm beams cheer'd the vales around:
I left my own fields far behind,
    And, pilgrim-like, trod foreign ground;

The glowing landscape's charms I caught,
    Where'er I look'd or wander'd o'er,
And every wood and field methought
    A greener, brighter prospect wore.

Delicious morn! thou'lt always find,
    When even pastime intervenes,
A vacant opening in my mind
    To think and cherish thy fond scenes;
Though no huge rock approach'd my sight,
    Nor lofty mountain rear'd its head,
Enough for wonder and delight
    All around my path was spread.

Sometimes musing on the sky,
    Then list'ning to the waterfall,
Now marking sunbeams mounted high
    Glistening shine on Walkherd hall—

Thus I often made a stand,
    Thus I mark'd each curious spot,
And, seemingly to court my hand,
    I now and then a cowslip got.

But, Barnack Sinnoms, thine's the place,
    Where antique forms are dimly shewn;
There, o'er thy moss-grown hills, I trace
    Scenes which never will be known:
The deep-sunk moat, the stony mound,
    Brought o'er my mind a pensive fit;
But "ah," thought I, while looking round,
    "Their heads don't ache that made yon pit."

O thou long-remember'd morn,
    How blest was I in these dear vales,
When snugly hid beneath the thorn
    I mus'd o'er Bloomfield's "Rural Tales:"

And there, sweet bard! thy "forest-song,"
Describ'd with energy sublime,
Fraught with such music, charm'd my tongue,
And turn'd my simple thoughts to rhyme.

Thus ever varying my mind,
Ever running like the rill,
Soon I left these scenes behind
In quest of others brighter still;
Yet not for ever! no, ye vales,
I love your pleasant shades too well,
And often since to view your dales
I've brush'd along the upland swell.

Now nothing, save a running stream,
For awhile my eye engag'd,
Whose plaintive murmurs sooth'd my dream,
And all aspiring thoughts assuag'd;

Now, when near its mossy bank,
I well remember how I lay,
Stretching o'er the oaken plank
To see the dancing beetles play.

Though the stranger passing by
Scarcely gave a single look,
Yet for a whole day could I lie
And pore upon this little brook;
Well pleas'd to view its winding rounds,
And see the eddying purls it made,
But still its daisy-skirted bounds,
Like "Barnham water," want a shade.

The passing hours jogg'd on apace,
And in their progress seem'd to say
"Haste, and gain that destin'd place,
Or soon thou'lt lose the flitting day:"

I instantly obey'd their call,
Nor went to where the footpath lay,
But clamber'd o'er an old rough wall,
And stole across the nearest way.

No spire I caught, nor woody swell,
My eye confin'd to lower bounds,
Yet not to mark the flowret's bell,
But watch the owners of the grounds;
Their presence was my only fear,
No boughs to shield me if they came,
And soon amid my rash career
I deem'd such trespassing to blame.

For troubled thoughts began to rise,
Of ills almost beyond relief
Which might from this one cause arise,
And leave me then to want reprief;

So arguing with myself how vain
    An afterthought, " still to keep free"
Made me to seek the road again,
    And own the force of liberty.

For oh, its unabated power
    Did then my breast with raptures fill,
And sure it was a happy hour
    That led me up to Barnack hill;
There uncontroll'd I knew no bounds,
    But look'd o'er villages a crowd,
And cots and spires to farthest rounds,
    While far trees seem'd a misty cloud.

When tir'd with such far-stretching views,
    I left the green hill's sideling slope,
But O so tempting was the muse,
    She made me wish, she made me hope;

I wish'd and hoped that future days
    (For scenes prophetic fill'd my breast)
Would grant to me a crown of bays
    By singing maids and shepherds drest.

These for awhile gave such delight,
    And occupied my mind so strong,
That not one view could tempt my sight,
    But all unheeded pass'd along;
Save only when that destin'd place,
    As yet unknown, though long endear'd,
Enrich'd with many a nameless grace,
    Through fancy's flitting eye appear'd.

SONG.

Of all the days in memory's list,
Those motley banish'd days;
Some overhung with sorrow's mist,
Some gilt with hopeful rays;
There is a day 'bove all the rest
That has a lovely sound,
There is a day I love the best—
When Patty first was found.

When first I look'd upon her eye,
And all her charms I met,
There's many a day gone heedless by,
But that I'll ne'er forget;

I met my love beneath the tree,
 I help'd her o'er the stile,
The very shade is dear to me
 That blest me with her smile.

Strange to the world my artless fair,
 But artless as she be,
She found the witching art when there
 To win my heart from me;
And all the days the year can bring,
 As sweet as they may prove,
There'll ne'er come one like that I sing,
 Which found the maid I love.

HELPSTONE GREEN.

Ye injur'd fields, ye once were gay,
When nature's hand display'd
Long waving rows of willows grey,
And clumps of hawthorn shade;
But now, alas! your hawthorn bowers
All desolate we see,
The spoilers' axe their shade devours,
And cuts down every tree.

Not trees alone have own'd their force,
Whole woods beneath them bow'd;
They turn'd the winding rivulet's course,
And all thy pastures plough'd;

To shrub or tree throughout thy fields
    They no compassion show;
The uplifted axe no mercy yields,
    But strikes a fatal blow.

Whene'er I muse along the plain,
    And mark where once they grew,
Remembrance wakes her busy train
    And brings past scenes to view:
The well-known brook, the favourite tree,
    In fancy's eye appear,
And next, that pleasant green I see,
    That green for ever dear.

O'er its green hills I've often stray'd
    In childhood's happy hour,
Oft sought the nest along the shade
    And gather'd many a flower;

And there, with playmates often join'd
In fresher sports to plan;
But now increasing years have coin'd
Those children into man.

The green's gone too—ah, lovely scene!
No more the kingcup gay
Shall shine in yellow o'er the green,
And shed its golden ray;
No more the herdsman's early call
Shall bring the cows to feed,
No more the milkmaid's evening bawl
In "Come mull" tones succeed.

Both milkmaid's shouts and herdsman's call
Have vanish'd with the green,
The kingcups yellow, shades and all,
Shall never more be seen;

But the thick-cultur'd tribes that grow
Will so efface the scene,
That after-times will hardly know
It ever was a green.

Farewel, thou favourite spot, farewel!
Since every effort's vain,
All I can do is still to tell
Of thy delightful plain;
But that joy's short;—increasing years,
That did my youth presage,
Will now, as each new day appears,
Bring on declining age.

Reflection pierces deadly keen,
While I the moral scan,—
As are the changes of the green
So is the life of man:

Youth brings age with faultering tongue,
That does the exit crave;
There's one short scene presents the throng,
Another shows the grave.

TO THE VIOLET.

Sweet tiny flower of darkly hue,
Lone dweller in the pathless shade;
How much I love thy pensive blue
Of innocence so well display'd!

What time the watery skies are full
Of streaming dappled clouds so pale,
And sideling rocks, more white than wool,
Portending snowy sleet, or hail;

I 'gin to seek thy charming flower
    Along each hedge-row's mossy seat,
Where, dithering many a cold bleak hour,
    I've hugg'd myself in thy retreat.

What makes me cherish such fond taste,
    What makes such raptures spring for thee,
Is, that thou lov'st the dreary waste
    Which is so well belov'd by me.

For solitude should be my choice
    Could I this labouring life resign,
To see the little birds rejoice,
    And thy sweet flowers in clusters shine.

I'd choose a cave beside some rock,
    Clos'd in all round with ash and thorn,
That near my door thy tribe might flock
    To shed their sweets in early morn.

But, ah ! that way would never prove
    Means to sustain impending life ;
I must forego those scenes I love,
    And still beat on with needy strife.

Sweet flower ! we must reverse the plan,
    Nor cherish such romantic views ;
I'll strive to seek thee *when I can*,
    Through noontide heat or evening dews.

To spring return, with all thy train
    Of flowrets cloth'd in varied hue,
I long to see that morn again
    Which brings to light the violet blue.

THE WOOD-CUTTER'S NIGHT SONG.

Welcome, red and roundy sun,
Dropping lowly in the west;
Now my hard day's work is done,
I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
Bill and mittens, lie ye there!

Though to leave your pretty song,
Little birds, it gives me pain,
Yet to-morrow is not long,
Then I'm with you all again.

If I stop, and stand about,
Well I know how things will be,
Judy will be looking out
Every now-and-then for me.

So fare-ye-well! and hold your tongues,
Sing no more until I come;
They're not worthy of your songs
That never care to drop a crumb.

All day long I love the oaks,
But, at nights, yon little cot,
Where I see the chimney smokes,
Is by far the prettiest spot.

Wife and children all are there,
To revive with pleasant looks,
Table ready set, and chair,
Supper hanging on the hooks.

Soon as ever I get in,
When my faggot down I fling,
Little prattlers they begin
Teasing me to talk and sing.

Welcome, red and roundy sun,
Dropping lowly in the west;
Now my hard day's work is done,
I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
Bill and mittens, lie ye there!

SONG OF PRAISE.

IMITATION OF THE 148TH PSALM.

Warm into praises, kindling muse,
With grateful transport raise thy views
To Him, who moves this ball,
Who whirls, in silent harmony,
The earth, the ocean, air, and sky—
O praise the Lord of all!

Ye angels—hymning round your king,
Praise Him who gives you power to sing,
Ye hosts—with raptures burn;
Who station'd you in bliss, proclaim!
Oh, bless your benefactor's name,
Betokening kind return.

Ye spreading heavens, arching high,
Ye scenes unknown beyond the sky,
Creation's Maker own:
"Let there be light"—your Ruler said;
And instant your blue curtain spread
In triumph round his throne.

Thou moon, meek guardian of the night,
Ye planets of inferior light,
Ye lamps of rays divine,
Ye suns—dart forth your splendid rays
To Him who metes your nights and days,
And suffers you to shine.

O praise His name, His mercy bless,
Ye poor, like me, in 'whelmed distress;
O hail protection given:
When sin and sorrow die away,
Our hopes His promise still shall stay
Of recompensing heaven.

Thunders that fright the trembling ground,
Ye forked lightnings, flashing round,
    Or quench'd in 'whelming shower;
While skies in vollied rolls are rent,—
While nature pauses, silent bent,—
    Adore Almighty Power.

Ye minstrel birds, wild woodland's charms,
Whose song each child of nature warms
    With your lov'd haunts in view;
From Him you borrow'd every note,
Then open wide your chanting throat
    To give the tribute due.

Mis-shapen germs of parent earth,
Waiting, dependent for your birth,
    The sun's enlivening rays;
Emerging from your silent tomb,
To join the hailing myriads, come,
    And kindle into praise.

Bowing adorers of the gale,
Ye cowslips, delicately pale,
Upraise your loaded stems;
Unfold your cups in splendor, speak!
Who deck'd you with that ruddy streak,
And gilt your golden gems?

Violets, sweet tenants of the shade,
In purple's richest pride array'd,
Your errand here fulfil;
Go bid the artist's simple stain
Your lustre imitate, in vain,
And match your Maker's skill.

Daisies, ye flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That stud the velvet sod;
Open to spring's refreshing air,
In sweetest smiling bloom declare
Your Maker, and my God!

Thou humble clothing of the trees,
Moss, in whose meanness genius sees
A world of wonders shine;
Put on your satin-smoothening green,
And let your Maker's power be seen,
And workmanship divine.

Creation's universal round,
That beat the air, or press the ground,
Or plough the seas, the same,
All join in chorusing accord,
Exalt your Maker and your Lord,
And praise His holy name:

Till o'er this sin-consuming world
Destruction's fated doom is hurl'd,
And ruin's self decays;
Then, freed from sin and Adam's fall,
All join, and hail Him Lord of all,
In everlasting praise.

TO THE BUTTERFLY.

Lovely insect, haste away,
Greet once more the sunny day;
Leave, O leave the murky barn,
Ere trapping spiders thee discern;
Soon as seen, they will beset
Thy golden wings with filmy net,
Then all in vain to set thee free,
Hopes all lost for liberty.
Never think that I belie,
Never fear a winter sky;
Budding oaks may now be seen,
Starry daisies deck the green,
Primrose groups the woods adorn,
Cloudless skies, and blossom'd thorn;

These all prove that spring is here,
Haste away then, never fear.
Skim o'er hill and valley free,
Perch upon the blossom'd tree;
Though my garden would be best,
Couldst thou but contented rest:
There the school-boy has no power
Thee to chase from flower to flower,
Harbour none for cruel sport,
Far away thy foes resort;
Nought is there but liberty,
Pleasant place for thee and me.
Then hither bend thy roving flight,
In my garden take delight.
Though the dew-bent level dale
Rears the lily of the vale,
Though the thicket's bushy dell
Tempts thee to the foxglove's bell,
Come but once within my bounds,
View my garden's airy rounds,

Soon thou'lt find the scene complete,
And every flowret twice as sweet:
Then, lovely insect, come away,
Greet once more the sunny day.
Oft I've seen, when warm and dry,
'Mong the bean-fields bosom-high,
How thy starry gems and gold
To admiration would unfold:
Lo! the arching heavenly bow
Doth all his dyes on thee bestow,
Crimson, blue, and watery green,
Mix'd with azure shade between;
These are thine—thou first in place,
Queen of all the insect race!
And I've often thought, alone,
This to thee was not unknown;
For amid the sunny hour,
When I've found thee on a flower,
(Searching with minutest gleg,)
Oft I've seen thy little leg

Soft as glass o'er velvet glides
Smoothen down thy silken sides;
Then thy wings would ope and shut;
Then thou seemingly wouldst strut:
Was it nature, was it pride?
Let the learned world decide.
Enough for me, (though some may deem
This a trifling, silly theme,)
Would'st thou in my garden come,
To join the bee's delightful hum;
These silly themes then, day and night,
Should be thy trifler's whole delight.
Then, lovely insect, haste away,
Greet once more the sunny day.

RURAL MORNING.

Soon as the twilight through the distant mist
In silver hemmings skirts the purple east,
Ere yet the sun unveils his smiles to view
And dries the morning's chilly robes of dew,
Young Hodge the horse-boy, with a soodly gait,
Slow climbs the stile, or opes the creaky gate,
With willow switch and halter by his side
Prepar'd for Dobbin, whom he means to ride;
The only tune he knows still whistling o'er,
And humming scraps his father sung before,
As "Wantley Dragon," and the "Magic Rose,"
The whole of music that his village knows,
Which wild remembrance, in each little town,
From mouth to mouth through ages handles down.
Onward he jolls, nor can the minstrel-throngs
Entice him once to listen to their songs;

Nor marks he once a blossom on his way;
A senseless lump of animated clay—
With weather-beaten hat of rusty brown,
Stranger to brinks, and often to a crown;
With slop-frock suiting to the ploughman's taste,
Its greasy skirtings twisted round his waist;
And harden'd high-lows clench'd with nails around,
Clamping defiance o'er the stony ground,
The deadly foes to many a blossom'd sprout
That luckless meets him in his morning's rout.
In hobbling speed he roams the pasture round,
Till hunted Dobbin and the rest are found;
Where some, from frequent meddlings of his whip,
Well know their foe, and often try to slip;
While Dobbin, tam'd by age and labour, stands
To meet all trouble from his brutish hands,
And patient goes to gate or knowly brake,
The teasing burden of his foe to take;
Who, soon as mounted, with his switching weals,
Puts Dob's best swiftness in his heavy heels,

The toltering bustle of a blundering trot
Which whips and cudgels ne'er increas'd a jot,
Though better speed was urged by the clown—
And thus he snorts and jostles to the town.
And now, when toil and summer's in its prime,
In every vill, at morning's earliest time,
To early-risers many a Hodge is seen,
And many a Dob's heard clattering o'er the green.

Now straying beams from day's unclosing eye
In copper-colour'd patches flush the sky,
And from night's prison strugglingly encroach,
To bring the summons of warm day's approach,
Till, slowly mounting o'er the ridge of clouds
That yet half shows his face, and half enshrouds,
Th' unfetter'd sun takes his unbounded reign
And wakes all life to noise and toil again:
And while his opening mellows o'er the scenes
Of wood and field their many mingling greens,

Industry's bustling din once more devours
The soothing peace of morning's early hours:
The grunt of hogs freed from their nightly dens,
And constant cacklings of new-laying hens,
And ducks and geese that clamorous joys repeat
The splashing comforts of the pond to meet,
And chirping sparrows dropping from the eaves
For offal kernels that the poultry leaves,
Oft signal-calls of danger chittering high
At skulking cats and dogs approaching nigh,
And lowing steers that hollow echoes wake
Around the yard, their nightly fast to break,
As from each barn the lumping flail rebounds
In mingling concert with the rural sounds;
While o'er the distant fields more faintly creep
The murmuring bleatings of unfolding sheep,
And ploughmen's callings that more hoarse proceed
Where industry still urges labour's speed,
The bellowing of cows with udders full
That wait the welcome halloo of "come mull,"

And rumbling waggons deafening again,
Rousing the dust along the narrow lane,
And cracking whips, and shepherd's hooting cries,
From woodland echoes urging sharp replies.
Hodge, in his waggon, marks the wondrous tongue,
And talks with echo as he drives along;
Still cracks his whip, bawls every horse's name,
And echo still as ready bawls the same:
The puzzling mystery he would gladly cheat,
And fain would utter what it can't repeat,
Till speedless trials prove the doubted elf
As skill'd in noise and sounds as Hodge himself;
And, quite convinced with the proofs it gives,
The boy drives on and fancies echo lives,
Like some wood-fiend that frights benighted men,
The troubling spirit of a robber's den.

And now the blossom of the village view,
With airy hat of straw, and apron blue,

And short-sleev'd gown, that half to guess reveals
By fine-turn'd arms what beauty it conceals;
Whose cheeks health flushes with as sweet a red
As that which stripes the woodbine o'er her head;
Deeply she blushes on her morn's employ,
To prove the fondness of some passing boy,
Who, with a smile that thrills her soul to view,
Holds the gate open till she passes through,
While turning nods beck thanks for kindness done,
And looks—if looks could speak—proclaim her won.
With well-scour'd buckets on proceeds the maid,
And drives her cows to milk beneath the shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam to molest her steals—
Sweet as the thyme that blossoms where she kneels;
And there oft scares the cooing amorous dove
With her own favour'd melodies of love.
Snugly retir'd in yet dew-laden bowers,
This sweetest specimen of rural flowers
Displays, red glowing in the morning wind,
The powers of health and nature when combin'd.

Last on the road the cowboy careless swings,
Leading tam'd cattle in their tending strings,
With shining tin to keep his dinner warm
Swung at his back, or tuck'd beneath his arm;
Whose sun-burnt skin, and cheeks chuff'd out with
fat,
Are dy'd as rusty as his napless hat.
And others, driving loose their herds at will,
Are now heard whooping up the pasture-hill;
Peel'd sticks they bear of hazel or of ash,
The rib-mark'd hides of restless cows to thrash.
In sloven garb appears each bawling boy,
As fit and suiting to his rude employ;
His shoes, worn down by many blundering treads,
Oft show the tenants needing safer sheds:
The pithy bunch of unripe nuts to seek,
And crabs sun-redden'd with a tempting cheek,
From pasture hedges, daily puts to rack
His tatter'd clothes, that scarcely screen the back,—

Daub'd all about as if besmear'd with blood,
Stain'd with the berries of the brambly wood
That stud the straggling briars as black as jet,
Which, when his cattle lair, he runs to get;
Or smaller kinds, as if begloss'd with dew,
Shining dim-powder'd with a downy blue,
That on weak tendrils lowly creeping grow
Where, choak'd in flags and sedges, wandering slow,
The brook purls simmering its declining tide
Down the crook'd boundings of the pasture-side.
There they to hunt the luscious fruit delight,
And dabbling keep within their charges' sight;
Oft catching prickly struttles on their rout,
And miller-thumbs and gudgeons driving out,
Hid near the arch'd brig under many a stone
That from its wall rude passing clowns have thrown.
And while in peace cows eat, and chew their cuds,
Moozing cool shelter'd 'neath the skirting woods,
To double uses they the hours convert,
Turning the toils of labour into sport;

Till morn's long streaking shadows lose their tails,
And cooling winds swoon into faultering gales;
And searching sunbeams warm and sultry creep,
Waking the teazing insects from their sleep;
And dreaded gadflies with their drowsy hum
On the burnt wings of mid-day zephyrs come,—
Urging each lown to leave his sports in fear,
    To stop his starting cows that dread the fly;
Droning unwelcome tidings on his ear,
    That the sweet peace of rural morn's gone by.

RURAL EVENING.

The sun now sinks behind the woodland green,
And twittering spangles glow the leaves between;
So bright and dazzling on the eye it plays
As if noon's heat had kindled to a blaze,

But soon it dims in red and heavier hues,
And shows wild fancy cheated in her views.
A mist-like moisture rises from the ground,
And deeper blueness stains the distant round.
The eye each moment, as it gazes o'er,
Still loses objects which it mark'd before;
The woods at distance changing like to clouds,
And spire-points croodling under evening's shrouds;
Till forms of things, and hues of leaf and flower,
In deeper shadows, as by magic power,
With light and all, in scarce-perceiv'd decay,
Put on mild evening's sober garb of grey.

Now in the sleepy gloom that blackens round
Dies many a lulling hum of rural sound,
From cottage door, farm-yard, and dusty lane,
Where home the cart-horse tolters with the swain,
Or padded holm, where village boys resort,
Bawling enraptur'd o'er their evening sport,

Till night awakens superstition's dread
And drives them prisoners to a restless bed.
Thrice happy eve of days no more to me!
Whoever thought such change belong'd to thee?
When, like to boys whom now thy gloom surrounds,
I chas'd the stag, or play'd at fox-and-hounds,
Or wander'd down the lane with many a mate
To play at see-saw on the pasture-gate,
Or on the threshold of some cottage sat
To watch the flittings of the shrieking bat, *
Who, seemly pleas'd to mock our treacherous view,
Would even swoop and touch us as he flew,
And vainly still our hopes to entertain
Would stint his route, and circle us again,—
Till, wearied out with many a coaxing call
Which boyish superstition loves to bawl,
His shrill song shrieking he betook to flight,
And left us puzzled in short-sighted night.
Those days have fled me, as from them they steal;
And I've felt losses they must shortly feel;

But sure such ends make every bosom sore,
To think of pleasures we must meet no more.

Now from the pasture milking-maidens come,
With each a swain to bear the burden home,
Who often coax them on their pleasant way
To soodle longer out in love's delay;
While on a mole-hill, or a resting stile,
The simple rustics try their arts the while
With glegging smiles, and hopes and fears between,
Snatching a kiss to open what they mean:
And all the utmost that their tongues can do,
The honey'd words which nature learns to woo,
The wild-flower sweets of language, "love" and "dear,"
With warmest utterings meet each maiden's ear;
Who as by magic smit, she knows not why,
From the warm look that waits a wish'd reply
Droops fearful down in love's delightful swoon,
As slinks the blossom from the suns of noon;

While sighs half-smother'd from the throbbing breast,
And broken words sweet trembling o'er the rest,
And cheeks, in blushes burning, turn'd aside,
Betray the plainer what she strives to hide.
The amorous swain sees through the feign'd disguise,
Discerns the fondness she at first denies,
And with all passions love and truth can move
Urges more strong the simpering maid to love;
More freely using toying ways to win—
Tokens that echo from the soul within—
Her soft hand nipping, that with ardour burns,
And, timid, gentlier presses its returns;
Then stealing pins with innocent deceit,
To loose the 'kerchief from its envied seat;
Then unawares her bonnet he'll untie,
Her dark-brown ringlets wiping gently by,
To steal a kiss in seemly feign'd disguise,
As love yields kinder taken by surprise:

While, nearly conquer'd, she less disapproves,
And owns at last, mid tears and sighs, she loves.
With sweetest feelings that this world bestows
Now each to each their inmost souls disclose,
Vow to be true; and to be truly ta'en,
Repeat their loves, and vow it o'er again;
And pause at loss of language to proclaim
Those purest pleasures, yet without a name:
And while, in highest ecstacy of bliss
The shepherd holds her yielding hand in his,
He turns to heaven to witness what he feels,
And silent shows what want of words conceals;
Then ere the parting moments hustle nigh,
    And night in deeper dye his curtain dips,
Till next day's evening glads the anxious eye,
    He swears his truth, and seals it on her lips.

At even's hour, the truce of toil, 'tis sweet
The sons of labour at their ease to meet,

On piled bench, beside the cottage door,
Made up of mud and stones and sodded o'er;
Where rustic taste at leisure trimly weaves
The rose and straggling woodbine to the eaves,—
And on the crowded spot that pales enclose
The white and scarlet daisy rears in rows,—
Training the trailing peas in bunches neat,
Perfuming evening with a luscious sweet,—
And sun-flowers planting for their gilded show,
That scale the window's lattice ere they blow,
Then, sweet to habitants within the sheds,
Peep through the diamond pane their golden heads:
Or at the shop where ploughs and harrows lie,
Well-known to every child that passes by
From shining fragments littering on the floor,
And branded letters burnt upon the door;
Where meddling boys, the torment of the street,
In hard-burnt cinders ready weapons meet,
To pelt the martins 'neath the eves at rest,
That oft are wak'd to mourn a ruin'd nest;

Or sparrows, that delight their nests to leave,
In dust to flutter at the cool of eve.
For such-like scenes the gossip leaves her home,
And sons of labour light their pipes, and come
To talk of wages, whether high or low,
And mumble news that still as secrets go;
When, heedless then to all the rest may say,
The beckoning lover nods the maid away,
And at a distance many an hour they seem
In jealous whisperings o'er their pleasing theme;
While children round them teasing sports prolong,
To twirl the top, or bounce the hoop along,
Or shout across the street their "one catch all,"
Or prog the hous'd bee from the cotter's wall.

Now at the parish cottage wall'd with dirt,
Where all the cumber-grounds of life resort,
From the low door that bows two props between,
Some feeble tottering dame surveys the scene:

By them reminded of the long-lost day
When she herself was young, and went to play;
And, turning to the painful scenes again,
The mournful changes she has met since then,
Her aching heart, the contrast moves so keen,
E'en sighs a wish that life had never been.
Still vainly sinning, while she strives to pray,
Half-smother'd discontent pursues its way
In whispering Providence, how blest she'd been,
If life's last troubles she'd escap'd unseen;
If, ere want sneak'd for grudg'd support from pride,
She had but shar'd of childhood's joys, and died.
And as to talk some passing neighbours stand,
And shove their box within her tottering hand,
She turns from echoes of her younger years,
And nips the portion of her snuff with tears.

THE CROSS ROADS;

OR, THE HAYMAKER'S STORY.

Stopt by the storm, that long in sullen black
From the south-west stain'd its encroaching track,
Haymakers, hustling from the rain to hide,
Sought the grey willows by the pasture-side;
And there, while big drops bow the grassy stems,
And bleb the withering hay with pearly gems,
Dimple the brook, and patter in the leaves,
The song or tale an hour's restraint relieves.
And while the old dames gossip at their ease,
And pinch the snuff-box empty by degrees,
The young ones join in love's delightful themes,
Truths told by gipsies, and expounded dreams;
And mutter things kept secrets from the rest,
As sweetheart's names, and whom they love the best;

And dazzling ribbons they delight to show,
The last new favours of some 'veigling beau,
Who with such treachery tries their hearts to move,
And, like the highest, bribes the maidens' love.
The old dames, jealous of their whisper'd praise,
Throw in their hints of man's deluding ways;
And one, to give her counsels more effect,
And by example illustrate the fact
Of innocence o'ercome by flattering man,
Thrice tapp'd her box, and pinch'd, and thus began.

"Now wenches listen, and let lovers lie,
Ye'll hear a story ye may profit by;
I'm your age treble, with some oddments to't,
And right from wrong can tell, if ye'll but do't:
Ye need not giggle underneath your hat,
Mine's no joke-matter, let me tell you that;
So keep ye quiet till my story's told,
And don't despise your betters cause they're old.

That grave ye've heard of, where the four roads
meet,
Where walks the spirit in a winding-sheet,
Oft seen at night, by strangers passing late,
And tarrying neighbours that at market wait,
Stalking along as white as driven snow,
And long as one's shadow when the sun is low;
The girl that's buried there I knew her well,
And her whole history, if ye'll hark, can tell.
Her name was Jane, and neighbour's children we,
And old companions once, as ye may be;
And like to you, on Sundays often stroll'd
To gipsies' camps to have our fortunes told;
And oft, God rest her, in the fortune-book
Which we at hay-time in our pockets took,
Our pins at blindfold on the wheel we stuck,
When hers would always prick the worst of luck;
For try, poor thing, as often as she might,
Her point would always on the blank alight;

Which plainly shows the fortune one's to have,
As such like go unwedded to the grave,—
And so it prov'd.—The next succeeding May,
We both to service went from sports and play,
Though in the village still; as friends and kin
Thought neighbour's service better to begin.
So out we went:—Jane's place was reckon'd good,
Though she 'bout life but little understood,
And had a master wild as wild can be,
And far unfit for such a child as she;
And soon the whisper went about the town,
That Jane's good looks procur'd her many a gown
From him, whose promise was to every one,
But whose intention was to wive with none.
'Twas nought to wonder, though begun by guess;
For Jane was lovely in her Sunday dress,
And all expected such a rosy face
Would be her ruin—as was just the case.
The while the change was easily perceiv'd,
Some months went by, ere I the tales believ'd;

For there are people now-a-days, Lord knows,
Will sooner hatch up lies than mend their clothes;
And when with such-like tattle they begin,
Don't mind whose character they spoil, a pin:
But passing neighbours often mark'd them smile,
And watch'd him take her milkpail o'er a stile;
And many a time, as wandering closer by,
From Jenny's bosom met a heavy sigh;
And often mark'd her, as discoursing deep,
When doubts might rise to give just cause to weep,
Smothering their notice, by a wish'd disguise
To slive her apron corner to her eyes.
Such signs were mournful and alarming things,
And far more weighty than conjecture brings;
Though foes made double what they heard of all,
Swore lies as proofs, and prophesied her fall.
Poor thoughtless wench! it seems but Sunday past
Since we went out together for the last,
And plain enough indeed it was to find
She'd something more than common on her mind;

For she was always fond and full of chat,
In passing harmless jokes 'bout beaus and that,
But nothing then was scarcely talk'd about,
And what there was, I even forc'd it out.
A gloomy wanness spoil'd her rosy cheek,
And doubts hung there it was not mine to seek;
She ne'er so much as mention'd things to come,
But sigh'd o'er pleasures ere she left her home;
And now-and-then a mournful smile would raise
At freaks repeated of our younger days,
Which I brought up, while passing spots of ground
Where we, when children, "hurly-burly'd" round,
Or "blindman-buff'd" some morts of hours away—
Two games, poor thing, Jane dearly lov'd to play.
She smil'd at these, but shook her head and sigh'd
Whene'er she thought my look was turn'd aside;
Nor turn'd she round, as was her former way,
To praise the thorn, white over then with May;
Nor stooped once, tho' thousands round her grew,
To pull a cowslip as she us'd to do:

For Jane in flowers delighted from a child—
I like the garden, but she lov'd the wild,
And oft on Sundays young men's gifts declin'd,
Posies from gardens of the sweetest kind,
And eager scrambled the dog-rose to get,
And woodbine-flowers at every bush she met.
The cowslip blossom, with its ruddy streak,
Would tempt her furlongs from the path to seek;
And gay long purple, with its tufty spike,
She'd wade o'er shoes to reach it in the dyke;
And oft, while scratching through the briary woods
For tempting cuckoo-flowers and violet buds,
Poor Jane, I've known her crying sneak to town,
Fearing her mother when she'd torn her gown.
Ah, these were days her conscience view'd with pain,
Which all are loth to lose, as well as Jane.
And, what I took more odd than all the rest,
Was, that same night she ne'er a wish exprest
To see the gipsies, so belov'd before,
That lay a stone's-throw from us on the moor:

I hinted it; she just reply'd again—
She once believ'd them, but had doubts since then.
And when we sought our cows, I call'd, 'Come mull!'
But she stood silent, for her heart was full.
She lov'd dumb things; and ere she had begun
To milk, caress'd them more than e'er she'd done;
But though her tears stood watering in her eye,
I little took it as her last good-bye;
For she was tender, and I've often known
Her mourn when beetles have been trampled on:
So I ne'er dream'd from this, what soon befel,
Till the next morning rang her passing-bell.
My story's long, but time's in plenty yet,
Since the black clouds betoken nought but wet;
And I'll e'en snatch a minute's breath or two,
And take another pinch, to help me through.

So, as I said, next morn I heard the bell,
And passing neighbours cross'd the street, to tell

That my poor partner Jenny had been found
In the old flag-pool, on the pasture, drown'd.
God knows my heart! I twitter'd like a leaf,
And found too late the cause of Sunday's grief;
For every tongue was loos'd to gabble o'er
The slanderous things that secret pass'd before:
With truth or lies they need not then be strict,
The one they rail'd at could not contradict.
'Twas now no secret of her being beguil'd,
For every mouth knew Jenny died with child;
And though more cautious with a living name,
Each more than guess'd her master bore the blame.
That very morning, it affects me still,
Ye know the foot-path sidles down the hill,
Ign'rant as babe unborn I pass'd the pond
To milk as usual in our close beyond,
And cows were drinking at the water's edge,
And horses brows'd among the flags and sedge,
And gnats and midges danc'd the water o'er,
Just as I've mark'd them scores of times before,

And birds sat singing as in mornings gone,—
While I as unconcern'd went soodling on,
But little dreaming, as the wakening wind
Flapp'd the broad ash-leaves o'er the pond reclin'd,
And o'er the water crink'd the curdled wave,
That Jane was sleeping in her watery grave.
The neatherd boy that us'd to tend the cows,
While getting whip-sticks from the dangling boughs
Of osiers drooping by the water-side,
Her bonnet floating on the top espied;
He knew it well, and hasten'd fearful down
To take the terror of his fears to town,—
A melancholy story, far too true;
And soon the village to the pasture flew,
Where, from the deepest hole the pond about,
They dragg'd poor Jenny's lifeless body out,
And took her home, where scarce an hour gone by
She had been living like to you and I.
I went with more, and kiss'd her for the last,
And thought with tears on pleasures that were past;

And, the last kindness left me then to do,
I went, at milking, where the blossoms grew,
And handfuls got of rose and lambtoe sweet,
And put them with her in her winding-sheet.
A wilful murder, jury made the crime;
Nor parson 'low'd to pray, nor bell to chime;
On the cross roads, far from her friends and kin,
The usual law for their ungodly sin
Who violent hands upon themselves have laid,
Poor Jane's last bed unchristian-like was made;
And there, like all whose last thoughts turn to heaven,
She sleeps, and doubtless hop'd to be forgiven.
But, though I say't, for maids thus 'veigl'd in
I think the wicked men deserve the sin;
And sure enough we all at last shall see
The treachery punish'd as it ought to be.
For ere his wickedness pretended love,
Jane, I'll be bound, was spotless as the dove,

And's good a servant, still old folks allow,
As ever scour'd a pail or milk'd a cow;
And ere he led her into ruin's way,
As gay and buxom as a summer's day:
The birds that ranted in the hedge-row boughs,
As night and morning we have sought our cows,
With yokes and buckets as she bounc'd along,
Were often deaf'd to silence with her song.
But now she's gone:—girls, shun deceitful men,
The worst of stumbles ye can fall again';
Be deaf to them, and then, as 'twere, ye'll see
Your pleasures safe as under lock and key.
Throw not my words away, as many do;
They're gold in value, though they're cheap to you.
And husseys hearken, and be warn'd from this,
If ye love mothers, never do amiss:
Jane might love hers, but she forsook the plan
To make her happy, when she thought of man.
Poor tottering dame, it was too plainly known
Her daughter's dying hasten'd on her own,

For from the day the tidings reach'd her door
She took to bed and looked up no more,
And, ere again another year came round,
She, well as Jane, was laid within the ground;
And all were griev'd poor Goody's end to see:
No better neighbour enter'd house than she,
A harmless soul, with no abusive tongue,
Trig as new pins, and tight's the day was long;
And go the week about, nine times in ten
Ye'd find her house as cleanly as her sen.
But, Lord protect us! time such change does bring,
We cannot dream what o'er our heads may hing;
The very house she liv'd in, stick and stone,
Since Goody died, has tumbled down and gone:
And where the marjoram once, and sage, and rue,
And balm, and mint, with curl'd-leaf parsley grew,
And double marygolds, and silver thyme,
And pumpkins 'neath the window us'd to climb;
And where I often when a child for hours
Tried through the pales to get the tempting flowers,

As lady's laces, everlasting peas,
True-love-lies-bleeding, with the hearts-at-ease,
And golden rods, and tansy running high
That o'er the pale-tops smil'd on passers-by,
Flowers in my time that every one would praise,
Tho' thrown like weeds from gardens now-a-days;
Where these all grew, now henbane stinks and spreads,
And docks and thistles shake their seedy heads,
And yearly keep with nettles smothering o'er;—
The house, the dame, the garden known no more:
While, neighbouring nigh, one lonely elder-tree
Is all that's left of what had us'd to be,
Marking the place, and bringing up with tears
The recollections of one's younger years.
And now I've done, ye're each at once as free
To take your trundle as ye us'd to be;
To take right ways, as Jenny should have ta'en,
Or headlong run, and be a second Jane;

For by one thoughtless girl that's acted ill
A thousand may be guided if they will:
As oft 'mong folks to labour bustling on,
We mark the foremost kick against a stone,
Or stumble o'er a stile he meant to climb,
While hind ones see and shun the fall in time.
But ye, I will be bound, like far the best
Love's tickling nick-nacks and the laughing jest,
And ten times sooner than be warn'd by me,
Would each be sitting on some fellow's knee,
Sooner believe the lies wild chaps will tell
Than old dames' cautions who would wish ye well:
So have your wills."—She pinch'd her box again,
And ceas'd her tale, and listen'd to the rain,
Which still as usual patter'd fast around,
And bow'd the bent-head loaded to the ground;
While larks, their naked nest by force forsook,
Prun'd their wet wings in bushes by the brook.

The maids, impatient now old Goody ceas'd,
As restless children from the school releas'd,
Right gladly proving, what she'd just foretold,
That young one's stories were preferr'd to old,
Turn to the whisperings of their former joy,
That oft deceive, but very rarely cloy.

RUSTIC FISHING.

On Sunday mornings, freed from hard employ,
How oft I mark the mischievous young boy
With anxious haste his pole and lines provide,
For make-shifts oft crook'd pins to thread were tied;
And delve his knife with wishes ever warm
In rotten dunghills for the grub and worm,
The harmless treachery of his hooks to bait;
Tracking the dewy grass with many a mate,

To seek the brook that down the meadows glides,
Where the grey willow shadows by its sides,
Where flag and reed in wild disorder spread,
And bending bulrush bows its taper head;
And, just above the surface of the floods,
Where water-lilies mount their snowy buds,
On whose broad swimming leaves of glossy green
The shining dragon-fly is often seen;
Where hanging thorns, with roots wash'd bare, appear,
That shield the moor-hen's nest from year to year;
While crowding osiers mingling wild among
Prove snug asylums to her brood when young,
Who, when surpris'd by foes approaching near,
Plunge 'neath the weeping boughs and disappear.
There far from terrors that the parson brings,
Or church bell hearing when its summons rings,
Half hid in meadow-sweet and keck's high flowers,
In lonely sport they spend the Sunday hours.

Though ill supplied for fishing seems the brook,
That breaks the mead in many a stinted crook,
Oft choak'd in weeds, and foil'd to find a road,
The choice retirement of the snake and toad,
Then lost in shallows dimpling restlessly,
In fluttering struggles murmuring to be free,—
O'er gravel stones its depth can scarcely hide
It runs the remnant of its broken tide,
Till, seemly weary of each choak'd control,
It rests collected in some gulled hole
Scoop'd by the sudden floods when winter's snow
Melts in confusion by a hasty thaw;
There bent in hopeful musings on the brink
They watch their floating corks that seldom sink,
Save when a wary roach or silver bream
Nibbles the worm as passing up the stream,
Just urging expectation's hopes to stay
To view the dodging cork, then slink away;
Still hopes keep burning with untir'd delight,
Still wobbling curves keep wavering like a bite:

If but the breezy wind their floats should spring,
And move the water with a troubling ring,
A captive fish still fills the anxious eyes
And willow-wicks lie ready for the prize;
Till evening gales awaken damp and chill,
And nip the hopes that morning suns instil;
And resting flies have tired their gauzy wing,
Nor longer tempt the watching fish to spring,
Who at the worm no nibbles more repeat,
But lunge from night in sheltering flag-retreat.
Then disappointed in their day's employ,
They seek amusement in a feebler joy.
Short is the sigh for fancies prov'd untrue:
With humbler hopes still pleasure they pursue
Where the rude oak-bridge scales the narrow pass,
Half hid in rustling reeds and scrambling grass,
Or stepping stones stride o'er the narrow sloughs
Which maidens daily cross to milk their cows;
There they in artless glee for minnows run,
And wade and dabble past the setting sun;

Chasing the struttle o'er the shallow tide,
And flat stones turning up where gudgeons hide.
All former hopes their ill success delay'd,
In this new change they fancy well repaid.
And thus they wade, and chatter o'er their joys
Till night, unlook'd-for, young success destroys.
Drives home the sons of solitude and streams,
And stops uncloy'd hope's ever-fresh'ning dreams.
They then, like school-boys that at truant play,
In sloomy fear lounge on their homeward way,
And inly tremble, as they gain the town,
Where chastisement awaits with many a frown,
And hazel twigs, in readiness prepar'd,
For their long absence bring a meet reward.

SUNDAY WALKS.

How fond the rustic's ear at leisure dwells
On the soft soundings of his village bells,
As on a Sunday morning at his ease
He takes his rambles, just as fancies please,
Down narrow balks that intersect the fields,
Hid in profusion that its produce yields:
Long twining peas, in faintly misted greens;
And wing'd-leaf multitudes of crowding beans;
And flighty oatlands of a lighter hue;
And speary barley bowing down with dew;
And browning wheat-ear, on its taper stalk,
With gentle breezes bending o'er the balk,
Greeting the parting hand that brushes near
With patting welcomes of a plenteous year.

Or narrow lanes, where cool and gloomy-sweet
Hedges above-head in an arbour meet,
Meandering down, and resting for awhile
Upon a moss-clad molehill or a stile;
While every scene that on his leisure crowds,
Wind-waving valleys and light passing clouds,
In brighter colours seems to meet the eye,
Than in the bustle of the days gone by.
A peaceful solitude around him creeps,
And nature seemly o'er her quiet sleeps;
No noise is heard, save sutherings through the trees
Of brisk wind gushes, or a trembling breeze;
And song of linnets in the hedge-row thorn,
Twittering their welcomes to the day's return;
And hum of bees, where labour's doom'd to stray
In ceaseless bustle on his weary way;
And low of distant cattle here and there,
Seeking the stream, or dropping down to lair;
And bleat of sheep, and horses' playful neigh,
From rustic's whips, and plough, and waggon, free,

Baiting in careless freedom o'er the leas,
Or turn'd to knap each other at their ease.
While 'neath the bank on which he rests his head
The brook mourns drippling o'er its pebbly bed,
And whimpers soothingly a calm serene
O'er the lull'd comforts of a Sunday scene,
He ponders round, and muses with a smile
On thriving produce of his earlier toil;
What once were kernels from his hopper sown,
Now browning wheat-ears and oat-bunches grown,
And pea-pods swell'd, by blossoms long forsook,
And nearly ready for the scythe and hook:
He pores with wonder on the mighty change
Which suns and showers perform, and thinks it strange;
And though no philosophic reasoning draws
His musing marvels home to nature's cause,
A simple feeling in him turns his eye
To where the thin clouds smoke along the sky;

And there his soul consents the Power must reign
Who rules the year, and shoots the spindling grain,
Lights up the sun, and sprinkles rain below—
The fount of nature whence all causes flow.
Thus much the feeling of his bosom warms,
Nor seeks he farther than his soul informs.

A six-days' prisoner, life's support to earn
From dusty cobwebs and the murky barn,
The weary thresher meets the rest that's given,
And thankful soothes him in the boon of heaven;
But happier still in Sabbath-walks he feels,
With love's sweet pledges poddling at his heels,
That oft divert him with their childish glee
In fruitless chases after bird and bee;
And, eager gathering every flower they pass
Of yellow lambtoe and the totter-grass,
Oft whimper round him disappointment's sigh
At sight of blossom that's in bloom too high,

And twitch his sleeve with all their coaxing powers
To urge his hand to reach the tempting flowers:
Then as he climbs, their eager hopes to crown,
On gate or stile to pull the blossoms down
Of pale hedge-roses straggling wild and tall,
And scrambling woodbines that outgrow them all,
He turns to days when he himself would teaze
His tender father for such toys as these,
And smiles with rapture, as he plucks the flowers,
To meet the feelings of those lovely hours,
And blesses Sunday's rest, whose peace at will
Retains a portion of those pleasures still.

But when the duty of the day's expir'd,
And priest and parish offer what's requir'd,
When godly farmer shuts his book again
To talk of profits from advancing grain,
Short memory keeping what the parson read,
Prayers 'neath his arm, and business in his head;

And, dread of boys, the clerk is left to close
The creaking church-door on its week's repose;
Then leave me Sunday's remnant to employ
In seeking sweets of solitary joy,
And lessons learning from a simple tongue,
Where nature preaches in a cricket's song;
Where every tiny thing that flies and creeps
Some feeble language owns, its prayer to raise;
Where all that lives, by noise or silence, keeps
A homely sabbath in its Maker's praise.

There, free from labour, let my musings stray
Where footpaths ramble from the public way
In quiet loneliness o'er many a scene,
Through grassy close, or grounds of blossom'd bean;
Oft winding balks where groves of willows spread
Their welcome waving shadows over-head,
And thorns beneath in woodbines often drest
Inviting strongly in their peace to rest;

Or wildly left to follow choice at will
O'er many a trackless vale and pathless hill,
Or, nature's wilderness, o'er heaths of goss,
Each footstep sinking ankle-deep in moss,
By pleasing interruptions often tied
A hedge to clamber or a brook to stride;
Where no approaching feet or noises rude
Molest the quiet of one's solitude,
Save birds, their song broke by a false alarm,
Through branches fluttering from their fancy'd harm;
And cows and sheep with startled low and bleat
Disturb'd from lair by one's unwelcome feet,—
The all that's met in Sunday's slumbering ease,
That adds to, more than checks the power to please.
And sweet it is to creep one's blinded way
Where woodland boughs shut out the smiles of day,
Where, hemm'd in glooms that scarce give leave to
spy
A passing cloud or patch of purple sky,

We track, half hidden from the world besides,
Sweet hermit-nature that in woodlands hides;
Where nameless flowers that never meet the sun,
Like bashful modesty, the sight to shun,
Bud in their snug retreat, and bloom, and die,
Without one notice of a passing eye;
There, while I drop me in the woody waste
'Neath arbours Nature fashions to her taste,
Entwining oak-trees with the ivy's gloom
And woodbines propping over boughs to bloom,
And scallop'd briony mingling round her bowers
Whose fine bright leaves make up the want of
flowers,—
With nature's minstrels of the woods let me,
Thou Lord of sabbaths, add a song to thee,
An humble offering for the holy day
Which thou most wise and graciously hast given,
As leisure dropt in labour's rugged way
To claim a passport with the rest to heaven.

THE CRESS-GATHERER.

Soon as the spring its earliest visit pays,
And buds with March and April's lengthen'd days
Of mingled suns and shades, and snow, and rain,
Forcing the crackling frost to melt again;
Oft sprinkling from their bosoms, as they come,
A dwindling daisy here and there to bloom;
I mark the widow, and her orphan boy,
In preparation for their old employ.
The cloak and hat that had for seasons past
Repell'd the rain and buffeted the blast,
Though worn to shreddings, still are occupied
In make-shift way their nakedness to hide;
For since her husband died her hopes are few,
When time's worn out the old, to purchase new.

Upon the green they're seen by rising sun,
To sharp winds croodling they would vainly shun,
With baskets on their arm and hazel crooks
Dragging the sprouting cresses from the brooks;
A savoury sallad sought for Luxury's whim,
Though small reward her labours meet from him,
When, parcel'd out, she humbly takes for sale
The simple produce of the water'd vale
In yearly visits to some market town,
Meeting by turns a penny and a frown.
Of all the masks deception ever weaves,
Life, thine's the visage that the most deceives;
One hour of thine an emperor's glory greets,
Another turns him begging in the streets:
E'en this poor wretch, thy meanest link, who lives
On scantiest sustenance that labour gives,
Has known her better days, whom thou, times gone,
E'en condescended to look kindly on.
Things went not thus, when abler hands supplied
Life's vain existence ere her husband died,

Who various ways a living did pursue,
Clerk of the parish, and schoolmaster too.
He punctual always rang the evening bell,
And sang " Amen" on Sundays loud and well;
And though not nice in this and that respect,
Was rarely found his duty to neglect.
His worldly ways religions ne'er perplext,
He never fail'd to recollect the text,
Or quote the sermon's passages by heart
In warm devotion o'er an honest quart;
And, as a brother of those subtle tools
That make such figuring in our country schools,
He lov'd his skill to flourish, and to show
As well as godly he was learned too;
Though, with the boast most common to his kin,
The use of figures he knew little in,—
By far too puzzling for his head were they,
He sought fame's purchase by an easier way;
And, like his scholars, with his A, B, C
Was found more ready, than with " rule of three.'

He'd many things to crack on with his ale,
For clowns less learn'd to wonder at the tale;
And o'er his pot he'd take the news and preach,
And observations make from speech to speech,
Till those around him swore each wise remark
Show'd him more fit for parson than for clerk.
To minutes he would tell when moons were new,
And of eclipses talk the seasons through,
Run o'er as ready as he'd read his prayers
All the saint-days the calendar declares;
Mystic conclusions draw from many a sign
Which made him judge of weather foul or fine;
And dripping moons, or suns in crimson set,
To him sure tokens were of fair or wet.
Of wonders he knew all the yearly store
That fill the learned almanacks of Moore;
Earthquakes, and plagues, and floods, when they
befel,
From second father Noah's days, could tell;

Till most gave out, had he divulg'd his trade,
The best of almanacks he would have made;
And much they wonder'd, when he died, to find
He left no fragment of his art behind.
And as he always, for the sake of fame,
Conceal'd the sources whence his learning came,
His artless list'ners, who of books none knew
'Sides the large Bible in the parson's pew,
Thought he more things than lawful understood,
And knowledge got from helpers not too good.

When he was living she had food on shelf,
And knew no trials to support herself,
Though industry would oft from leisure steal
Odd hours to knit, or turn the spinning-wheel:
Choice is not misery; she had neighbour's fare,
Got hand to mouth, and decent clothes to wear.
Though joys fall sparing in this checquer'd life,
Wide difference parts the widow from the wife:

Encroaching want show'd not such frightful form,
Nor drove her dithering in the 'numbing storm,
Picking half naked round the brooks for bread,
To earn her penny ere she can be fed;
In grief pursuing every chance to live,
That timely toils in seasons please to give;
Through hot and cold, come weather as it will,
Striving with pain, and disappointed still;
Just keeping from expiring life's last fire,
That pining lingers ready to expire:
The winter through, near barefoot, left to pull
From bramble twigs her little mites of wool;
A hard-earn'd sixpence when her mops are spun,
By many a walk and aching finger won;
And seeking, hirpling round from time to time,
Her harmless sticks from hedges hung with rime,
The daily needings want's worst shifts require,
To hunt her fuel ere she makes her fire;
Where she, while grinning to the hissing blast,
With buds or berries often breaks her fast.

All summer, too, the little rest of care
Is every morning cheated of its share,
And ere one sunbeam glistens in the dew
The long wet pasture grass she dabbles through,
Where sprout the mushrooms in the fairy-rings,
Which night's black mystery to perfection brings;
And these she seeks, ere 'gin her early toils,
As extra gains to labour's scanty spoils:
By every means thus ling'ring life along,
Continual struggling 'gainst a stream too strong.

THE LAST OF MARCH.

WRITTEN AT LOLHAM BRIGS.

Though o'er the darksome northern hill
    Old ambush'd winter frowning flies,
And faintly drifts his threatenings still
    In snowy sleet and blackening skies;

Yet where the willow leaning lies
And shields beneath the bŭdding flower,
Where banks to break the wind arise,
'Tis sweet to sit and spend an hour.

Though floods of winter bustling fall
Adown the arches bleak and blea,
Though snow-storms clothe the mossy wall,
And hourly whiten o'er the lea;
Yet when from clouds the sun is free
And warms the learning bird to sing,
'Neath sloping bank and sheltering tree
'Tis sweet to watch the creeping spring.

Though still so early, one may spy
And track her footsteps every hour;
The daisy with its golden eye,
And primrose bursting into flower;

And snugly, where the thorny bower
Keeps off the nipping frost and wind,
Excluding all but sun and shower,
There children early violets find.

Here 'neath the shelving bank's retreat
The horse-blob swells its golden ball;
Nor fear the lady-smocks to meet
The snows that round their blossoms fall:
Here by the arch's ancient wall
The antique elder buds anew;
Again the bulrush sprouting tall
The water wrinkles, rippling through.

As spring's warm herald April comes,
As nature's sleep is nearly past,
How sweet to hear the wakening hums
Of aught beside the winter blast!

Of feather'd minstrels first and last,
The robin's song's again begun;
And, as skies clear when overcast,
Larks rise to hail the peeping sun.

The startling peewits, as they pass,
Scream joyous whirring over-head,
Right glad the fields and meadow grass
Will quickly hide their careless shed:
The rooks, where yonder witchens spread,
Quawk clamorous to the spring's approach;
Here silent, from its watery bed,
To hail its coming, leaps the roach.

While stalking o'er the fields again
In stripp'd defiance to the storms,
The hardy seedsman spreads the grain,
And all his hopeful toil performs:

In flocks the timid pigeon swarms,
For scatter'd kernels chance may spare;
And as the plough unbeds the worms,
The crows and magpies gather there.

Yon bullocks low their liberty,
The young grass cropping to their fill;
And colts, from straw-yards neighing free,
Spring's opening promise 'joy at will:
Along the bank, beside the rill
The happy lambkins bleat and run,
Then weary, 'neath a sheltering hill
Drop basking in the gleaming sun.

At distance from the water's edge,
On hanging sallow's farthest stretch,
The moor-hen 'gins her nest of sedge
Safe from destroying school-boy's reach.

Fen-sparrows chirp and fly to fetch
The wither'd reed-down rustling nigh,
And, by the sunny side the ditch,
Prepare their dwelling warm and dry.

Again a storm encroaches round,
Thick clouds are darkening deep behind;
And, through the arches, hoarsely sound
The risings of the hollow wind:
Spring's early hopes seem half resign'd,
And silent for a while remain;
Till sunbeams broken clouds can find,
And brighten all to life again.

Ere yet a hailstone pattering comes,
Or dimps the pool the rainy squall,
One hears, in mighty murmuring hums,
The spirit of the tempest call:

Here sheltering 'neath the ancient wall
I still pursue my musing dreams,
And as the hailstones round me fall
I mark their bubbles in the streams.

Reflection here is warm'd to sigh,
Tradition gives these brigs renown,
Though heedless Time long pass'd them by
Nor thought them worthy noting down:
Here in the mouth of every clown
The "Roman road" familiar sounds;
All else, with everlasting frown,
Oblivion's mantling mist surrounds.

These walls the work of Roman hands!
How may conjecturing Fancy pore,
As lonely here one calmly stands,
On paths that age has trampled o'er.

The builders' names are known no more;
No spot on earth their memory bears;
And crowds, reflecting thus before,
Have since found graves as dark as theirs.

The storm has ceas'd,—again the sun
The ague-shivering season dries;
Short-winded March, thou'lt soon be done,
Thy fainting tempest mildly dies.
Soon April's flowers and dappled skies
Shall spread a couch for lovely May,
Upon whose bosom Nature lies
And smiles her joyous youth away.

MAN'S MORTALITY.

PARTLY FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

WRITTEN IN SICKNESS.

OUR years look behind us like tales that are told,
Our days like to shadows keep passing us by,
We take a short step to our pillow of mould,
And rise on life's stage, like to vapours, and die :
As frail as the grass of the meadow is man,
His youth like the blossom of summer comes on,
That smiles to the sunbeam till autumn turns wan,
And the wind passes o'er it and bids it be gone.

Thus one generation keeps passing away,
And new generations their places attain,
And the friends of our bosom, that leave us to-day,
Shall ne'er fill the circle of friendship again ;

In future transactions done under the sun
    No portion is left them to act as before:
They go,—and their lives, as if never begun,
    In the sleep of the grave shall be heard of no
        more.

Their exit they make to that awful Unknown,
    And vain we conjecture where now they sojourn;
The world's ways and wealth are no longer their own,
    To their houses and lands they shall never re-
        turn.
All nature, though sown with mortality's seed,
    Some parts will a spark of long-living retain,
As branches, the tree that's hewn down, will succeed;
    But man is too mortal to flourish again.

Life's lamp in uncertainty burneth away,
    A weak waning vapour of doubtfullest light,
With cares ever ready to darken its ray,
    Till death, the extinguisher, hides it in night:

Our friends and our kindred we see them depart,
    Scant peace of our souls daily tearing away;
The dearest of pledges plac'd nearest the heart,
    Their memory is all we preserve from decay.

Love, sweetest of joy, is most bitter to trust,
    Fate's errand before us is constantly set,
A time is in waiting to turn into dust
    The fairest of faces that love ever met.
Death makes no distinction, he slays, as in right,
    The wise and the foolish, the king and his slave,
And beauty, that magic of empty delight:
    All fall at his footstool of terrors—the grave!

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

ADMIRAL LORD RADSTOCK.

'Tis sweet to recollect life's past controls,
And turn to days of sorrow when they're bye,
And think of gentle friends and feeling souls
That offered shelter when the storm was high,—
It thrills one's heart:—As mariners have turn'd,
When 'scap'd from shipwreck 'mid the billows' roar,
To look on fragments that the tempest spurn'd,
On which they clung, and struggled to the shore,
So sweet it is to turn.—And, hour by hour,
Reflection muses on the good and great,
That lent a portion of their wealthy power,
And sav'd a wormling from destruction's fate.

Oft to the patron of her first essays
    The rural muse, O Radstock, turns her eye,
Not with the fulsome noise of fawning praise,
    But soul's deep gushings in a silent sigh;
As drooping blossoms, dwindling deep in shade,
    Should e'er a sunbeam to their lot be given,
Perk up in hopeful bloom their feeble head,
    And seemly offer silent thanks to heaven.

THE WILD-FLOWER NOSEGAY.

In life's first years as on a mother's breast,
    When Nature nurs'd me in her flowery pride,
I cull'd her bounty, such as seemed best,
    And made my garlands by some hedge-row side:

With pleasing eagerness the mind reclaims
From black oblivion's shroud such artless scenes,
And cons the calendar of childish names
With simple joy, when manhood intervenes.

From the sweet time that spring's young thrills are born,
And golden catkins deck the sallow tree,
Till summer's blue-caps blossom mid the corn,
And autumn's ragwort yellows o'er the lea,
I roam'd the fields about, a happy child,
And bound my posies up with rushy ties,
And laugh'd and mutter'd o'er my visions wild,
Bred in the brain of pleasure's ecstacies.

Crimp-frilled daisy, bright bronze buttercup,
Freckt cowslip-peeps, gilt whins of morning's dew,
And hooded arum early sprouting up
Ere the white-thorn bud half unfolds to view,

And wan-hued lady-smocks, that love to spring
'Side the swamp margin of some plashy pond;
And all the blooms that early Aprils bring,
With eager joy each fill'd my playful hand:

The jaundice-tinctur'd primrose, sickly sere,
Mid its broad curled leaves of mellow green.
Hemm'd in with relics of the 'parted year,
The mournful wrecks of summers that have been—
Dead leaves of ash, and oak, and hazel tree,
The constant covering of all woody land;
With tiny violets, creeping plenteously,
That one by one entic'd my patient hand.

As shadowy April's suns and showers did pass,
And summer's wild profusions plenteous grew,
Hiding the spring-flowers in long weeds and grass,
What meads and copses would I wander thro'!

When on the water op'd the lily buds,
    And fine long purples shadow'd in the lake,
When purple bugles peeped in the woods
    'Neath darkest shades that boughs and leaves
        could make.

Then did I wear day's many hours away
    In gathering blooms of seemly sweetest kinds,
Scrambling for blossoms of the white-thorn May,
    Ere they fell victims to unfeeling winds;
And twisted woodbines, and the flusht briar rose,
    How sweet remembrance on the mind doth rise
As they bow'd arching where the runnel flows,
    To think how oft I waded for the prize.

The ragged-robins by the spinney lake,
    And flag-flower bunches deeper down the
        flood,
And, snugly hiding 'neath the feather'd brake,
    Full many a blue-bell flower and cuckoo-bud,

And old-man's beard, that wreath'd along the hedge
Its oddly rude misshapen tawny flowers,
And prickly burs that crowd the leaves of sedge,
Have claim'd my pleasing search for hours and hours.

And down the hay-fields, wading 'bove the knees
Through seas of waving grass, what days I've gone,
Cheating the hopes of many labouring bees
By cropping blossoms they were perch'd upon;
As thyme along the hills, and lambtoe knots,
And the wild stalking Canterbury bell,
By hedge-row side or bushy bordering spots,
That loves in shade and solitude to dwell.

And when the summer's swarms, half-nameless, fled,
And autumn's landscape faded bleak and wild,
When leaves 'gan fall and show their berries red,
Still with the season would I be beguil'd

Lone spots to seek, home leaving far behind,—
Where wildness rears her lings and teazle-burs,
And where, last lingering of the flowery kind,
Blue heath-bells tremble 'neath the shelt'ring furze.

Sweet were such walks on the half-barren wild,
Which ploughs leave quiet with their briars and brakes,
Prospects of freedom pleasing from a child,
To track the crook'd path which the rabbit makes!
On these past times one loves to look behind;
Nor lives a soul, mere trifles as they be,
But feels a joy in bringing to his mind
The wild-flower rambles of his infancy.

Tis sweet to view, as in a favour'd book,
Life's rude beginning page long turned o'er;
'Tis nature's common feeling, back to look
On things that pleas'd us, when they are no more:

Pausing on childish scenes a wish repeat,
    Seeming more sweet to value when we're men,
As one, awaken'd from a vision sweet,
    Wishes to sleep and dream it o'er again.

SONG.

There was a time, when love's young flowers
    With many a joy my bosom prest:
Sweet hours of bliss!—but short are hours,
    Those hours are fled—and I'm distrest.
I would not wish, in reason's spite;
    I would not wish new joy to gain;
I only wish for one delight,—
    To see those hours of bliss again.

There was a day, when love was young,
And nought but bliss did there belong;
When blackbirds nestling o'er us sung,
Ah me! what sweetness wak'd his song.
I wish not springs for ever fled;
I wish not birds' forgotten strain;
I only wish for feelings dead
To warm, and wake, and feel again.

But, ah! what once was joy is past:
The time's gone by; the day and hour
Are whirring fled on trouble's blast,
As winter nips the summer flower.
A shadow is but left the mind,
Of joys that once were real to view;
An echo only fills the wind,
With mocking sounds that once were true.

SONG.

THERE'S the daisy, the woodbine,
And crow-flower so golden;
There's the wild rose, the eglantine,
And May-buds unfolding;
There are flowers for my fairy,
And bowers for my love:
Wilt thou gang with me, Mary,
To the banks of Brooms-grove?

There's the thorn-bush and the ash-tree
To shield thee from the heat,
While the brook to refresh thee
Runs close by thy feet;

The thrushes are chanting clear,
In the pleasures of love;
Thou'rt the only thing wanting here
'Mid the sweets of Brooms-grove.

Then come ere a minute's gone,
Since the long summer's day
Puts her wings swift as linnets' on
For hieing away.
Then come with no doubtings near,
To fear a false love;
For there's nothing without thee, dear,
Can please in Brooms-grove.

The woodbine may nauntle here,
In blossoms so fine,
The wild roses mantling near
In blushes may shine;

Mary queen of each blossom proves,
She's the blossom I love,
She's the all that my bosom loves
'Mong the sweets of Brooms-grove.

SONG.

MARY, the day of love's pleasures has been,
And the day is o'erclouded and gone;
These eyes all their fulness of pleasure have seen,
What they never again shall look on.
The sun has oft risen and shrunk from the heaven,
And flowers with the night have been wet;
And many a smile on another's been given,
Since the first smile of Mary I met.

And eyes have been won with thy charms when
thou smil'd,
As ripe blossoms tempting the bee;
And kisses the sweets of thy lips have defiled,
Since last they breath'd heaven on me.
Their honey's first tasting was lovely and pleasant,
But others have rifled the cell:
Love sickens to think of the past and the present,
Bidding all that was Mary—farewel!

The blushes of rose-blossoms shortly endure,
Though sweet is their unbudding gem;
But love in long absence may often keep pure,
If jealousy blight not the stem.
We look o'er the doubts of our minds, and we
sicken,
And hope what we think is a dream;
We turn to the past, and love's jealousies quicken—
We cannot first pleasures redeem.

The sun will rise bright, though in night it be set;
And the dew-drop from blossoms will sever;
But the doubtfulness, Mary, that rose since we met,
Is pain to this bosom for ever.
The beauty of things raises constant desire;
The gem rarely 'scapeth the view;
In the fears of a second first love doth expire,
And biddeth false Mary adieu!

SONG.

Fill the foaming cups again,
Let's be merry while we may;
Man is foolish to complain
When such joys are in his way:

Cares may breed in peevish minds,
Life at best is short and vain,
Wisdom takes the joys she finds—
Fill the foaming cups again.

Fortune, she may slight us, boys,
Boast her thousands to our crowns,
Give to knaves her smiles and joys,
We can feast upon her frowns.
What care we how rich she be,
Let our needs but meet supply,
Kings may govern, so will we—
Foaming cups before we're dry.

Fill them foaming o'er again,
Fill with cordial to the brim;
Let the peevish soul complain,
Care is worthy none but him.

. Hearts of oak we're born to die;
Toast for comforts while we reign,—
"Let our needs but meet supply—
Foaming cups be fill'd again."

TO THE RURAL MUSE.

Simple enchantress! wreath'd in summer blooms
Of slender bent-stalks topt with feathery down,
Heath's creeping vetch, and glaring yellow brooms,
With ash-keys wavering on thy rushy crown;
Simple enchantress! how I've woo'd thy smiles,
How often sought thee far from flush'd renown;
Sought thee unseen where fountain-waters fell;
Touch'd thy wild reed unheard, in weary toils;
And though my heavy hand thy song defiles,
'Tis hard to leave thee, and to bid farewel.

Simple enchantress! ah, from all renown,
  Far off, my soul hath warm'd in bliss to see
The varied figures on thy summer-gown,
  That nature's finger works so 'witchingly;
The colour'd flower, the silken leaves that crown
  Green nestling bower-bush, and high towering
      tree;
Brooks of the sunny green and shady dell:
  Ah, sweet full many a time they've been to
      me;
And though my weak song faulters, sung to thee,
  I cannot, wild enchantress, bid farewel.

Still must I seek thee, though I wind the brook
  When morning sunbeams o'er the waters glide,
And trace thy footsteps in the lonely nook
  As evening moists the daisy by thy side;
Ah, though I woo thee on thy bed of thyme,—
  If courting thee be deem'd ambition's pride,

It is so passing sweet with thee to dwell—
    If love for thee in clowns be call'd a crime,
Forgive presumption, O thou queen of rhyme!
    I've lov'd thee long, I cannot bid farewel.

SONNETS.

SONNETS.

I.

HOME.

O Home, however homely,—thoughts of thee
    Can never fail to cheer the absent breast;
How oft wild raptures have been felt by me,
    When back returning, weary and distrest;
How oft I've stood to see the chimney pour
    Thick clouds of smoke in columns lightly blue,
And, close beneath, the house-leek's yellow flower,
    While fast approaching to a nearer view.
These, though they're trifles, ever gave delight;
    E'en now they prompt me with a fond desire,
Painting the evening group before my sight
    Of friends and kindred seated round the fire.
O Time! how rapid did thy moments flow,
That chang'd these scenes of joy to scenes of woe.

II.

THE TOMB.

Once musing o'er an old effaced stone,
Longing to know whose dust it did conceal,
I anxious ponder'd o'er what might reveal,
And sought the seeming date with weeds o'ergrown;
But that prov'd fruitless—both the date and name
Had been for ages in oblivion thrown.
The dim remains of sculptur'd ornament
Gave proof sufficient 'twas reward for fame:
This did my searching view so much torment,
That Time I question'd to expose the same;
But soon a check—" And what is it to thee
Whose dust lies here?—since thou wilt quickly be
Forgot like him:—then Time shall bid thee go
To heaven's pure bliss, or hell's tormenting woe."

III.

SORROWS FOR A FRIEND.

YE brown old oaks that spread the silent wood,
How soothing sweet your stillness used to be;
And still could bless, when wrapt in musing mood,
But now confusion suits the best to me.
"Is it for love," the breezes seem to say,
"That you forsake our woodland silence here?
Is it for love, you roam so far away
From these still shades you valu'd once so dear?"
"No, breezes, no!"—I answer with a sigh,
"Love never could so much my bosom grieve;
Turnhill, my friend!—alas! so soon to die—
That is the grief which presses me to leave:
Though noise can't heal, it may some balm bestow;
But Silence rankles in the wounds of woe."

IV.

TO MY COTTAGE.

Thou lowly cot, where first my breath I drew,
  Past joys endear thee, childhood's past delight;
Where each young summer's pictur'd on my view;
  And, dearer still, the happy winter-night,
When the storm pelted down with all his might,
  And roar'd and bellow'd in the chimney-top,
And patter'd vehement 'gainst the window-light,
  And on the threshold fell the quick eaves-drop.
How blest I've listen'd on my corner stool,
  Heard the storm rage, and hugg'd my happy spot,
While the fond parent wound her whirring spool,
  And spar'd a sigh for the poor wanderer's lot.
In thee, sweet hut, this happiness was prov'd,
  And these endear and make thee doubly lov'd.

V.

POVERTY.

RANK Poverty! dost thou my joys assail,
And with thy threat'nings fright me from my rest?
I once had thoughts, that with a Bloomfield's tale,
And leisure hours, I surely should be blest;
But now I find the sadly-alter'd scene,
From these few days I fondly thought my own,
Hoping to spend them private and alone,
But, lo! thy troop of spectres intervene:
Want shows his face, with Idleness between,
Next Shame's approaching step, that hates the throng,
Comes sneaking on, with Sloth that fetters strong.
Are these the joys my leisure hours must glean?
Then I decline:—but know where'er we meet,
Ye ne'er shall drive me from the Muses' seat.

VI.

TO MY MOTHER.

With filial duty I address thee, Mother,
Thou dearest tie which this world's wealth possesses;
Endearing name! no language owns another
That half the tenderness and love expresses;
The very word itself breathes the affection,
Which heaves the bosom of a luckless child
To thank thee, for that care and that protection,
Which once, where fortune frowns, so sweetly smil'd.
Ah, oft fond memory leaves its pillow'd anguish,
To think when in thy arms my sleep was sound;
And now my startled tear oft views thee languish,
And fain would drop its honey in the wound:
But I am doom'd the sad reverse to see,
Where the worst pain I feel, is loss of helping thee.

VII.

THE SNOWDROP.

Sweet type of innocence, snow-clothed blossom,
Seemly, though vainly, bowing down to shun
The storm hard-beating on thy wan white bosom,
Left in the swail, and little cheer'd by sun;
Resembling that frail jewel, just begun
To ope on vice's eye its witcheries blooming,
Midst all its storms, with little room to shun—
Ah, thou art winter's snowdrop, lovely Woman!
In this world dropt, where every evil's glooming
With killing tempests o'er its tender prey,
Watching the opening of thy beauties coming,
Its every infant charm to snatch away:
Then come the sorrows thou'rt too weak to brave,
And then thy beauty-cheek digs ruin's early grave.

VIII.

LIFE.

Life, thou art misery, or as such to me;
One name serves both, or I no difference see;
Tho' some there live would call thee heaven below,
But that's a nickname I've not learn'd to know:
A wretch with poverty and pains replete,
Where even useless stones beneath his feet
Cannot be gather'd up to say " they're mine,"
Sees little heaven in a life like thine.
Hope lends a sorry shelter from thy storms,
And largely promises, but small performs.
O irksome life! were but this hour my last!
This weary breath fain sighs for its decay;
O that my soul death's dreary vale had past,
And met the sunshine of a better day!

IX.

WRITTEN IN AUTUMN.

CHECQ'D Autumn, doubly sweet is thy declining,
To meditate within this 'wilder'd shade;
To view the wood in its pied lustre shining,
And catch thy varied beauties as they fade;
Where o'er broad hazel-leaves thy pencil mellows,
Red as the glow that morning's opening warms,
And ash or maple 'neath thy colour yellows,
Robbing some sunbeam of its setting charms:
I would say much of what now meets my eye,
But beauties lose me in variety.
O for the warmth of soul and 'witching measure,
Expressing semblance, Poesy, which is thine,
And Genius' eye to view this transient treasure,
That Autumn here might lastingly decline.

X.

ON DEATH.

O Life, thy name to me's a galling sound,
A sound I fain would wish to breathe no more;
One only peace for me my hopes have found,
When thy existence and wild race is o'er;
When Death, with one, heals every other wound,
And lays my aching head in the cold ground.
O happy hour! I only wish to have
Another moment's gasp, and then the grave.
I only wish for one departing sigh,
A welcome farewel take of all, and die.
Thou'st given me little, world, for thanks' return,
Thou temptst me little with thee still to 'bide:
One only cause in leaving thee I mourn,—
That I had e'er been born, nor in the cradle died.

XI.

NATIVE SCENES.

O NATIVE scenes, nought to my heart clings nearer
Than you, ye Edens of my youthful hours;
Nought in this world warms my affections dearer
Than you, ye plains of white and yellow flowers;
Ye hawthorn hedge-rows, and ye woodbine bowers,
Where youth has rov'd, and still where manhood roves
The pasture-pathway 'neath the willow groves.
Ah, as my eye looks o'er those lovely scenes,
All the delights of former life beholding;
Spite of the pain, the care that intervenes,—
When lov'd remembrance is her bliss unfolding,
Picking her childish posies on your greens,—
My soul can pause o'er its distress awhile,
And Sorrow's cheek find leisure for a smile.

XII.

PEACE.

I seek for Peace—I care not where 'tis found:
On this rude scene in briars and brambles drest,
If peace dwells here, 'tis consecrated ground,
And owns the power to give my bosom rest;
To soothe the rankling of each bitter wound,
Gall'd by rude Envy's adder-biting jest,
And worldly strife;—ah, I am looking round
For Peace's hermitage, can it be found?—
Surely that breeze that o'er the blue wave curl'd
Did whisper soft, "Thy wanderings here are blest."
How different from the language of the world!
Nor jeers nor taunts in this still spot are given:
Its calm's a balsam to a soul distrest;
And, where Peace smiles, a wilderness is heaven.

XIII.

MORNING.

O NOW the crimson east, its fire-streak burning,
Tempts me to wander 'neath the blushing morn,
Winding the zig-zag lane, turning and turning,
As winds the crooked fence's wilder'd thorn.
Where is the eye can gaze upon the blushes,
Unmov'd, with which yon cloudless heaven flushes?
I cannot pass the very bramble, weeping
'Neath dewy tear-drops that its spears surround,
Like harlot's mockery on the wan cheek creeping,
Gilding the poison that is meant to wound;—
I cannot pass the bent, ere gales have shaken
Its transient crowning off, each point adorning,—
But all the feelings of my soul awaken,
To own the witcheries of most lovely Morning.

XIV.

TO AN HOUR-GLASS.

Old-fashioned uncouth measurer of the day,
I love to watch thy filtering burthen pass;
Though some there are that live would bid thee stay;
But these view reasons through a different glass
From him, Time's meter, who addresses thee.
The world has joys which they may deem as such;
The world has wealth to season vanity,
And wealth is theirs to make their vainness much:
But small to do with joys and Fortune's fee
Hath he, Time's chronicler, who welcomes thee.
So jog thou on, through hours of doom'd distress;
So haste thou on the glimpse of hopes to come;
As every sand-grain counts a trouble less,
As every drain'd glass leaves me nearer home.

XV.

TO AN ANGRY BEE.

Malicious insect, little vengeful bee,
With venom-sting thou'rt whirling round and round
A harmless head that ne'er meant wrong to thee,
And friendship's hand it is thou'dst wish to wound:
Cool thy revenge, and judge thy foes aright;
The harden'd neatherd and the sweet-tooth'd boy—
Thy moss-wrapp'd treasures, if but in their sight,
Soon would they all thy honey'd lives destroy:
But delve the cowslip-peep in labour free,
And dread no pilferer of thy hoards in me.—
Thus man to man oft takes a friend for foe,
And spurns a blessing when its in his power,
Mistakes real happiness for worldly woe,
Crops sorrow's weed, and treads on pleasure's flower.

XVI.

DAY-BREAK.

The red east glows, the dewy cheek of Day
    Has not yet met the sun's o'erpowering smile;
The dew-drops in their beauty still are gay,
    Save those the shepherd's early steps defile.
    Pleas'd will I linger o'er the scene awhile;
The black clouds melt away, the larks awaken—
    Sing, rising bird, and I will join with thee:
With day-break's beauties I have much been taken,
    As thy first anthem breath'd its melody.
    I've stood and paus'd the varied cloud to see,
And warm'd in ecstacy, and look'd and warm'd,
    When day's first rays, the far hill top adorning,
Fring'd the blue clouds with gold: O doubly charm'd
    I hung in raptures then on early Morning.

XVII.

TO THE IVY.

Dark creeping Ivy, with thy berries brown,
That fondly twists' on ruins all thine own,
Old spire-points studding with a leafy crown
Which every minute threatens to dethrone;
With fearful eye I view thy height sublime,
And oft with quicker step retreat from thence
Where thou, in weak defiance, striv'st with Time,
And holdst his weapons in a dread suspense.
But, bloom of ruins, thou art dear to me,
When, far from danger's way, thy gloomy pride
Wreathes picturesque around some ancient tree
That bows his branches by some fountain-side:
Then sweet it is from summer suns to be,
With thy green darkness overshadowing me.

XVIII.

HOPE.

This world has suns, but they are overcast;
This world has sweets, but they're of ling'ring bloom;
Life still expects, and empty falls at last;
Warm Hope on tiptoe drops into the tomb.
Life's journey's rough—Hope seeks a smoother way,
And dwells on fancies which to-morrow see,—
To-morrow comes, true copy of to-day,
And empty shadow of what is to be;
Yet cheated Hope on future still depends,
And ends but only when our being ends.
I long have hoped, and still shall hope the best
Till heedless weeds are scrambling over me,
And hopes and ashes both together rest
At journey's end, with them that cease to be.

XIX.

THE ARBOUR.

There is a wilder'd spot delights me well,
Pent in a corner of my native vale,
Where tiny blossoms with a purple bell
Shiver their beauties to the autumn-gale.
'Tis one of those mean arbours that prevail
With manhood's weakness, still to seek and love
For what is past:—Destruction's axe did fail
To cut it down with its companion grove.
Though but a trifling thorn, oft shelt'ring warm
A brood of summer birds, by nature led
To seek for covert in a hasty storm;
I often think it lifts its lonely cares,
In piteous bloom where all the rest are fled,
Like a poor warrior the rude battle spares.

XX.

NATURE.

O SIMPLE Nature, how I do delight
To pause upon thy trifles—foolish things,
As some would call them.—On the summer night,
Tracing the lane-path where the dog-rose hings
With dew-drops seeth'd, while chick'ring cricket sings;
My eye can't help but glance upon its leaves,
Where love's warm beauty steals her sweetest blush,
When, soft the while, the Even silent heaves
Her pausing breath just trembling thro' the bush,
And then again dies calm, and all is hush.
O how I feel, just as I pluck the flower
And stick it to my breast—words can't reveal;
But there are souls that in this lovely hour
Know all I mean, and feel whate'er I feel.

XXI.

A WISH.

Be where I may when Death brings in his bill,
Demanding payment for life's ling'ring debt,
Or in my native village nestling still,
Or tracing scenes I've never known as yet,
O let one wish, go where I will, be mine,—
To turn me back and wander home to die,
'Mong nearest friends my latest breath resign,
And in the church-yard with my kindred lie,
'Neath the thick-shaded sycamore's decay,
Its broad leaves trembling to the breeze of day:
To see its shadow o'er my ashes wave,
How soothing will it be, while, hovering near,
My unseen spirit haunts its daisied grave,
Pausing on scenes in life once lov'd so dear.

XXII.

THE LAST OF APRIL.

Old April wanes, and her last dewy morn
Her death-bed steeps in tears:—to hail the May
New blooming blossoms 'neath the sun are born,
And all poor April's charms are swept away.
The early primrose, peeping once so gay,
Is now chok'd up with many a mounting weed,
And the poor violet we once admir'd
Creeps in the grass unsought for—flowers succeed,
Gaudy and new, and more to be desired,
And of the old the school-boy seemeth tired.
So with us all, poor April, as with thee!
Each hath his day;—the future brings my fears:
Friends may grow weary, new flowers rising be,
And my last end, like thine, be steep'd in tears.

XXIII.

HEREAFTER.

Ah, when this world and I have shaken hands,
And all the frowns of this sad life got through,
When from pale Care and Sorrow's dismal lands
I turn a welcome and a wish'd adieu;
How blest and happy, to eternal day,
To endless happiness without a pain,
Will my poor weary spirit sail away,
That long long look'd for "better place" to gain:
How sweet the scenes will open on her eye,
Where no more troubles, no more cares annoy;
All the sharp troubles of this life torn by,
And safely moor'd in heaven's eternal joy:
Sweet will it seem to Fate's oppressed worm,
As trembling Sunbeams creeping from the storm.

XXIV.

EARLY SPRING.

Winter is past—the little bee resumes
Her share of sun and shade, and o'er the lea
Hums her first hymnings to the flowers' perfumes,
And wakes a sense of gratefulness in me:
The little daisy keeps its wonted pace,
Ere March by April gets disarm'd of snow;
A look of joy opes on its smiling face,
Turn'd to that Power that suffers it to blow.
Ah, pleasant time, as pleasing as you be,
One still more pleasing Hope reserves for me;
Where suns, unsetting, one long summer shine,
Flowers endless bloom, where winter ne'er destroys:
O may the good man's righteous end be mine,
That I may witness these unfading joys.

XXV.

SUMMER.

How sweet, when weary, dropping on a bank,
Turning a look around on things that be!
E'en feather-headed grasses, spindling rank,
A trembling to the breeze one loves to see;
And yellow buttercup, where many a bee
Comes buzzing to its head and bows it down;
And the great dragon-fly with gauzy wings,
In gilded coat of purple, green, or brown,
That on broad leaves of hazel basking clings,
Fond of the sunny day:—and other things
Past counting, please me while thus here I lie.
But still reflective pains are not forgot:
Summer sometime shall bless this spot, when I,
Hapt in the cold dark grave, can heed it not.

XXVI.

THE ANTS.

What wonder strikes the curious, while he views
The black ant's city, by a rotten tree,
Or woodland bank! In ignorance we muse:
Pausing, annoy'd,—we know not what we see.
Such government and thought there seem to be;
Some looking on, and urging some to toil,
Dragging their loads of bent-stalks slavishly:
And what's more wonderful, when big loads foil
One ant or two to carry, quickly then
A swarm flock round to help their fellow-men.
Surely they speak a language whisperingly,
Too fine for us to hear; and sure their ways
Prove they have kings and laws, and that they be
Deformed remnants of the Fairy-days.

XXVII.

MILTON ABBEY.

HERE grandeur triumphs at its topmost pitch
In gardens, groves, and all that life beguiles;
Here want, too, meets a blessing from the rich,
And hospitality for ever smiles:
Soldier or sailor, from his many toils,
Here finds no cause to rail at pomp and pride;
He shows his scars, and talks of battle's broils,
And wails his poverty, and is supplied.
No dogs bark near, the fainting wretch to chide,
That bows to misery his aged head,
And tells how better luck did once betide,
And how he came to beg his crust of bread:
Here he but sighs his sorrows and is fed—
Mansion of wealth, by goodness dignified!

XXVIII.

IN HILLY-WOOD.

How sweet to be thus nestling deep in boughs.
    Upon an ashen stoven pillowing me;
Faintly are heard the ploughmen at their ploughs,
    But not an eye can find its way to see.
The sunbeams scarce molest me with a smile,
    So thick the leafy armies gather round;
And where they do, the breeze blows cool the while,
    Their leafy shadows dancing on the ground.
Full many a flower, too, wishing to be seen,
Perks up its head the hiding grass between.—
    In mid-wood silence, thus, how sweet to be;
Where all the noises, that on peace intrude,
    Come from the chittering cricket, bird, and bee,
Whose songs have charms to sweeten solitude.

XXIX.

A COPSE IN WINTER.

SHADES, though you're leafless, save the bramble-
spear,
Whose weather-beaten leaves, of purple stain.
In hardy stubbornness cling all the year
To their old thorns, till Spring buds new again;
Shades, still I love you better than the plain,
For here I find the earliest flowers that blow,
While on the bare blea bank do yet remain
Old winter's traces, little heaps of snow.
Beneath your ashen roots, primroses grow
From dead grass tufts and matted moss, once more;
Sweet beds of violets dare again be seen
In their deep purple pride; and, gay display'd,
The crow-flowers, creeping from the naked green,
Add early beauties to your sheltering shade.

XXX.

TO A RED CLOVER BLOSSOM.

Sweet bottle-shaped flower of lushy red,
Born when the summer wakes her warmest breeze,
Among the meadow's waving grasses spread,
Or 'neath the shade of hedge or clumping trees,
Bowing on slender stem thy heavy head;
In sweet delight I view thy summer bed,
And list the drone of heavy humble-bees
Along thy honey'd garden gaily led,
Down corn-field, striped balks, and pasture-leas.
Fond warmings of the soul, that long have fled,
Revive my bosom with their kindlings still,
As I bend musing o'er thy ruddy pride;
Recalling days when, dropt upon a hill,
I cut my oaten trumpets by thy side.

XXXI.

NIGHT.

Night spreads upon the plain her ebon pall,
Day seems unable to wash out the stain;
A pausing truce kind nature gives to all,
And fairy nations now have leave to reign:
So may conjecturing Fancy think, and feign.
Doubtless in tiny legions, now unseen,
They venture from their dwellings once again:
From keck-stalk cavity, or hollow bean,
Or perfum'd bosom of pea-flower between,
They to the dark green rings now haste, to meet,
To dance, or pay some homage to their queen;
Or journey on, some pilgrim-friend to greet.
With rushy switch they urge some beetle's flight,
And ride to revel, ere 'tis morning-light.

XXXII.

NOON.

THE mid-day hour of twelve the clock counts o'er,
A sultry stillness lulls the air asleep;
The very buzz of flies is heard no more,
Nor faintest wrinkles o'er the waters creep.
Like one large sheet of glass the waters shine,
Reflecting on their face the burnt sunbeam:
The very fish their sporting play decline,
Seeking the willow-shadows 'side the stream.
And, where the hawthorn branches o'er the pool,
The little bird, forsaking song and nest,
Flutters on dripping twigs his limbs to cool,
And splashes in the stream his burning breast.
O, free from thunder, for a sudden shower,
To cherish nature in this noon-day hour!

XXXIII.

AUTUMN.

THE Spring is gone, the Summer-beauty wanes,
Like setting sunbeams, in their last decline;
As evening shadows, lingering on the plains,
Gleam dim and dimmer till they cease to shine:
The busy bee hath humm'd himself to rest;
Flowers dry to seed, that held the sweets of Spring;
Flown is the bird, and empty is the nest,
His broods are rear'd, no joys are left to sing.
There hangs a dreariness about the scene,
A *present* shadow of a bright *has been*.
Ah, sad to prove that Pleasure's golden springs,
Like common fountains, should so quickly dry,
And be so near allied to vulgar things!—
The joys of this world are but born to die.

XXXIV.

TO TIME.

In Fancy's eye, what an extended span,
Time, hoary herald, has been stretch'd by thee:
Vain to conceive where thy dark burst began,
Thou birthless, boundless, vast immensity!
Vain all conceptions of weak-minded man
Thee to unravel from thy mystery!—
In mortal wisdom, thou'st already ran
A circled travel of eternity;
Still, but a moment of thy mighty plan
Seems yet unwound, from what thy age shall see,
Consuming Tyrant of all mortal kind!—
And what thou art, and what thou art to be,
Is known to none, but that Immortal Mind
Who reigns alone superior to thee.

XXXV.

WINTER.

The small wind whispers through the leafless hedge
Most sharp and chill, where the light snowy flakes
Rest on each twig and spike of wither'd sedge,
Resembling scatter'd feathers;—vainly breaks
The pale split sunbeam through the frowning cloud,
On Winter's frowns below—from day to day
Unmelted still he spreads his hoary shroud,
In dithering pride on the pale traveller's way,
Who, croodling, hastens from the storm behind
Fast gathering deep and black, again to find
His cottage-fire and corner's sheltering bounds;
Where, haply, such uncomfortable days
Make musical the wood-sap's frizzling sounds,
And hoarse loud bellows puffing up the blaze.

XXXVI.

TWILIGHT.

The setting Sun withdraws his yellow light,
A gloomy staining shadows over all,
While the brown beetle, trumpeter of Night,
Proclaims his entrance with a droning call.
How pleasant now, where slanting hazels fall
Thick, o'er the woodland stile, to muse and lean;
To pluck a woodbine from the shade withal,
And take short snatches o'er the moisten'd scene;
While deep and deeper shadows intervene,
And leave fond Fancy moulding to her will
The cots, and groves, and trees so dimly seen,
That die away more undiscerned still;
Bringing a sooty curtain o'er the sight,
And calmness in the bosom still as night.

XXXVII.

SPRING.

What charms does Nature at the spring put on,
When hedges unperceived get stain'd in green;
When even moss, that gathers on the stone,
Crown'd with its little knobs of flowers is seen;
And every road and lane, through field and glen,
Triumphant boasts a garden of its own.
In spite of nipping sheep, and hungry cow,
The little daisy finds a place to blow:
And where old Winter leaves her splashy slough,
The lady-smocks will not disdain to grow;
And dandelions like to suns will bloom,
Aside some bank or hillock creeping low;—
Though each too often meets a hasty doom
From trampling clowns, who heed not where they go.

XXXVIII.

EARLY SORROWS.

FULL many a sharp, sad, unexpected thorn
  Finds room to wound Life's lacerated flower,
Which subtle fate, to every mortal born,
  Guides unprevented in an early hour.
Ah, cruel thorns, too soon I felt your power;
  Your throbbing shoots of never-ceasing pain
Hope's blossoms in their bud did long devour,
  And left continued my sad eyes to strain
On wilder'd spots chok'd up with Sorrow's weeds,
Alas, that's shaken but too many seeds
  To leave me room for Hopes to bud again.
But Fate may torture, while it is decreed,
  Where all my hope's unblighted blooms remain,
That Heaven's recompense shall this succeed.

XXXIX.

EVENING.

What time the cricket unmolested sings,
And blundering beetles try their clumsy wings,
Leave me to meet the sweets of Even's hour
By hawthorn hedges when the May's in flower,
With light enough to guard my cautious tread
As not to trample on the daisy's head,
Down beaten pathways of a wish'd extent,
Ev'n unimpeded by the bending bent
That, night and morning, bowing down with dew,
Sullies the brightness of the maiden's shoe:
There leave me musing 'neath the bow'ring ash,
Counting the knoll of bells, or spurting dash
Of muttering fountain-fall, with wild delight,
Till Even loses in the blank of Night.

XL.

EXPRESSION.

Expression, throbbing utterance of the soul,
Born in some bard, when with the muses' fires
His feeling bursts unaw'd, above control,
And to the topmost height of heaven aspires,
Stealing the music of some angel's song
To tell of all he sees and all admires,
Which fancy's colours paint so sweet, so strong!—
And to far humbler scenes thou dost belong:
In Sorrow thou art warm, when speaking tears
Down some sad cheek in silence wail their wrong;
And, ah, most sweet, Expression, then appears
Thy smile of Gratitude, where bosoms bleed.
Though high the lofty poet's frenzy steers,
In nature's simplest garb thou'rt sweet indeed.

XLI.

CHILDHOOD.

WHAT trifles touch our feelings, when we view
The simple scenes of Childhood's early day,
Pausing on spots where gather'd blossoms grew,
Or favour'd seats of many a childish play;
Bush, dyke, or wood, where painted pooties lay,
Where oft we've crept and crept the shades among,
Where ivy hung old roots bemoss'd with grey,
Where nettles oft our infant fingers stung,
And tears would weep the gentle wounds away:—
Ah, gentle wounds indeed, I well may say,
To those sad Manhood's tortur'd passage found,
Where naked Fate each day new pangs doth feel,
Clearing away the brambles that surround,
Inflicting tortures death can only heal.

XLII.

A LAIR AT NOON.

THE hawthorn gently stopt the sun, beneath,
The ash above its quiv'ring shadows spread,
And downy bents, that to the air did wreathe,
Bow'd 'neath my pressure in an easy bed;
The water whirled round each stunted nook,
And sweet the splashings on the ear did swim
Of fly-bit cattle gulshing in the brook,
Nibbling the grasses on the fountain's brim:
The little minnows, driv'n from their retreat,
Still sought the shelving bank to shun the heat.
I fain had slept, but flies would buzz around;
I fain had looked calmly on the scene,
But the sweet snug retreat my search had found
Waken'd the Muse to sing the woody screen.

XLIII.

WOMAN.

O Woman, lovely Woman, magic flower,
What loves, what pleasures in thy graces meet!
Thou blushing blossom, dropt from Eden's bower;
Thou fair exotic, delicately sweet!—
Thy tender beauty Mercy wrung from heaven,
A drop of honey in a world of woe;
From Wisdom's pitying hand thy sweets were given,
That man a glimpse of happiness might know.
—If destitute of Woman, what were life?
Could wealth and wine thy loveliness bestow,
And give the bliss that centres in a wife,
That makes one loth to leave this heaven below?
Pains they might soothe, and cares subdue awhile,
But soon the soul would sigh for 'witching Woman's
smile.

XLIV.

ON SEEING A PICTURE OF SACRED CONTEMPLATION.

Serene she looks, she wears an angel's form,
Her arching eyes are fix'd upon the sky,
Gloomy, yet glist'ning 'tween black curls wip'd by,
Like a bright rainbow painted on the storm;
Her blue-vein'd breasts religion's comforts warm,
The bible open'd on her lap doth lie.
What mixing beauties in her face appear!
Charms more than mortal lighten up her smiles;
Strong Faith and Hope unite her soul to cheer,
And Resignation makes her smiles more dear.
No earthly thoughts her purity defile;
As vap'ring clouds by summer's suns are driven,
Sin's temptings from the scriptures' charm recoil,
And all her soul transported seems in heaven.

XLV.

WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER.

AUTUMN, I love thy parting look to view
In cold November's day, so bleak and bare,
When, thy life's dwindled thread worn nearly thro',
With ling'ring, pott'ring pace, and head bleach'd bare,
Thou, like an old man, bidd'st the world adieu.
I love thee well: and often, when a child,
Have roam'd the bare brown heath a flower to find;
And in the moss-clad vale, and wood-bank wild
Have cropt the little bell-flowers, pearly blue,
That trembling peep the shelt'ring bush behind.
When winnowing north-winds cold and bleaky blew,
How have I joy'd, with dithering hands, to find
Each fading flower; and still how sweet the blast,
Would bleak November's hour restore the joy that's past.

XLVI.

SUMMER TINTS.

How sweet I've wander'd bosom-deep in grain,
When Summer's mellowing pencil sweeps his shade
Of ripening tinges o'er the checquer'd plain:
Light tawny oat-lands with a yellow blade;
And bearded corn, like armies on parade;
Beans lightly scorch'd, that still preserve their green;
And nodding lands of wheat in bleachy brown;
And streaking banks, where many a maid and clown
Contrast a sweetness to the rural scene,—
Forming the little haycocks up and down:
While o'er the face of nature softly swept
The ling'ring wind, mixing the brown and green
So sweet, that shepherds from their bowers have crept,
And stood delighted musing o'er the scene.

XLVII.

ON HEARING A LADY PLAY ON THE MUSICAL GLASSES.

BEYOND expression, delicately fine,
Beneath her slender fingers swept the sound
Of 'witching tones, melodious, divine;
Soothing and soft upon the sense they wound,
Join'd with the syrens' music, as it were,
As her sweet voice came mingling on the ear.
Ah, who but knows what woman's voice can do!
To every soul such melody is dear;
Angelic harmony, and beauty too!
Our very hearts melt in the sounds we hear:
The breaks—the pauses—check our pulse's beats.
Enraptur'd memory still each air retains,—
And, as the mind the syren's songs repeats,
Creates sensations sweeter than her strains.

XLVIII.

SUMMER MORNING.

I LOVE to peep out on a summer's morn,
Just as the scouting rabbit seeks her shed,
And the coy hare squats nestling in the corn,
Frit at the bow'd ear tott'ring o'er her head;
And blund'ring pheasant, that from covert springs,
His short sleep broke by early trampling feet,
Makes one to startle with his rustling wings,
As through the boughs he seeks more safe retreat.
The little flower, begemm'd around with drops
That shine at sunrise like to burnish'd gold,
'Tis sweet to view: the milk-maid often stops,
And wonders much such spangles to behold;
The hedger, too, admires them deck the thorn,—
And thinks he sees no beauties like the Morn.

XLIX.

JOYS OF YOUTH.

How pleasing simplest recollections seem!
Now summer comes, it warms me to look back
On the sweet happiness of youth's wild track,
Varied and fleeting as a summer dream:
Here have I paus'd upon the sweeping rack
That specks like wool-flocks through the purple sky;
Here have I careless stooped down to catch
The meadow flower that entertain'd my eye;
And as the butterfly went whirring by,
How anxious for its settling did I watch;
And oft long purples on the water's brink
Have tempted me to wade, in spite of fate,
To pluck the flowers.—Oh, to look back and think,
What pleasing pains such simple joys create!

L.

WILD NOSEGAY.

The yellow lambtoe I have often got,
Sweet creeping o'er the banks in summer-time,
And totter-grass, in many a trembling knot;
And robb'd the molehill of its bed of thyme:
And oft with anxious feelings would I climb
The waving willow-row, a stick to trim,
To reach the water-lily's tempting flower
That on the surface of the pool did swim:
I've stretch'd, and tried vain schemes for many
an hour;
And scrambled up the hawthorn's prickly bower,
For ramping woodbines and blue bitter-sweet.
Still Summer blooms, these flowers appear again;
But, ah, the question's useless to repeat,
When will the feelings come I witness'd then?

LI.

SABBATH WALKS.

Upon the sabbath, sweet it is to walk
'Neath wood-side shelter of oak's spreading tree,
Or by a hedge-row track, or padded balk;
Or stretch 'neath willows on the meadow lea,
List'ning, delighted, hum of passing bee,
And curious pausing on the blossom's head;
And mark the spider at his labour free,
Spinning from bent to bent his silken thread;
And lab'ring ants, by careful nature led
To make the most of summer's plenteous stay;
And lady-cow, beneath its leafy shed,
Call'd, when I mix'd with children, "clock-a-clay,"
Pruning its red wings on its pleasing bed,
Glad like myself to shun the heat of day.

LII.

ON TASTE.

· Taste is from heaven,
An inspiration nature can't bestow;
Though nature's beauties, where a taste is given,
Warm the ideas of the soul to flow
With that intense, enthusiastic glow
That throbs the bosom, when the curious eye
Glances on beauteous things that give delight,
Objects of earth, or air, or sea, or sky,
That bring the very senses in the sight
To relish what we see:—but all is night
To the gross clown—nature's unfolded book,
As on he blunders, never strikes his eye;
Pages of landscape, tree, and flower, and brook,
Like bare blank leaves, he turns unheeded by.

LIII.

MAY-NOON.

How sweet it is, when suns get warmly high,
In the mid-noon, as May's first cowslip springs,
And the young cuckoo his soft ditty sings,
To wander out, and take a book; and lie
'Neath some low pasture-bush, by guggling springs
That shake the sprouting flag as crimpling by;
Or where the sunshine freckles on the eye
Through the half-clothed branches in the woods;
Where airy leaves of woodbines, scrambling nigh,
Are earliest venturers to unfold their buds;
And little rippling runnels curl their floods,
Bathing the primrose-peep, and strawberry wild,
And cuckoo-flowers just creeping from their hoods,
With the sweet season, like their bard, beguil'd.

LIV.

SUMMER EVENING.

How pleasant, when the heat of day is bye,
And seething dew empurples round the hill
Of the horizon, sweeping with the eye
In easy circles, wander where we will!
While o'er the meadow's little fluttering rill
The twittering sunbeam weakens cool and dim,
And busy hum of flies is hush'd and still.
How sweet the walks by hedge-row bushes seem,
On this side wavy grass, on that the stream;
While dog-rose, woodbine, and the privet-spike,
On the young gales their rural sweetness teem,
With yellow flag-flowers rustling in the dyke;
Each mingling into each, a ceaseless charm
To every heart that nature's sweets can warm.

LV.

TO * * * * * *

THOU lovely bud, with many weeds surrounded,
I once again address thee with a song;
To cheer thee up 'gainst Envy's adder-tongue
That deeply oft thy reputation wounded,
And did thy tender blossom mickle wrong.
But, look thou up!—'tis known in nature's law
That serpents seek the honey-hoarding bee,
Rosemary's sweets the loathsome toad will draw,
So beauty curdles envy's look on thee.
Fain would the peacock's tail the bow express
Which paints the clouds so sweet in April's rain,
And just the same, that imp of ugliness
Mimics thy lovely blossom,—but in vain;
And fain would poison what she can't possess.

LVI.

PLEASURES PAST.

Spring's sweets they are not fled, though Summer's
 blossom
Has met its blight of sadness, drooping low ;
Still flowers gone by find beds in memory's bosom,
Life's nursling buds among the weeds of woe.
Each pleasing token of Spring's early morning
Warms with the pleasures which we once did know ;
Each little stem the leafy bank adorning,
Reminds of joys from infancy that flow.
Spring's early heralds on the winter smiling,
That often on their errands meet their doom,
Primrose and daisy, dreary hours beguiling,
Smile o'er my pleasures past whene'er they come ;
And the speckt throstle never wakes his song,
But Life's past Spring seems melting from his tongue.

LVII.

HELPSTONE CHURCH-YARD.

WHAT makes me love thee now, thou dreary scene,
And see in each swell'd heap a peaceful bed?
I well remember that the time has been,
To walk a church-yard when I us'd to dread;
And shudder'd, as I read upon the stone
Of well-known friends and next-door-neighbours gone.
But then I knew no cloudy cares of life,
Where ne'er a sunbeam comes to light me thorough;
A stranger then to this world's storms and strife,
Where ne'er a charm is met to lull my sorrow:
I then was blest, and had not eyes to see
Life's future change, and Fate's severe to-morrow;
When all those ills and pains should compass me,
With no hope left but what I meet in thee.

LVIII.

TO AN EARLY BUTTERFLY.

Thrice welcome here again, thou flutt'ring thing,
That gaily seek'st about the opening flower,
And opest and shutt'st thy gaudy-spangled wing
Upon its bosom in the sunny hour;
Fond grateful thoughts from thy appearance spring:
To see thee, Fly, warms me once more to sing
His universal care who hapt thee down,
And did thy winter-dwelling please to give.
That Being's smiles on me dampt winter's frown,
And snatch'd me from the storm, and bade me live.
And now again the welcome season's come,
'Tis thine and mine, in nature's grateful pride,
To thank that God who snatch'd us from the tomb,
And stood our prop, when all gave way beside.

LIX.

TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN KEATS.

The world, its hopes, and fears, have pass'd away;
No more its trifling thou shalt feel or see;
Thy hopes are ripening in a brighter day,
While these left buds thy monument shall be.
When Rancour's aims have past in nought away,
Enlarging specks discern'd in more than thee,
And beauties 'minishing which few display,—
When these are past, true child of Poesy,
Thou shalt survive—Ah, while a being dwells,
With soul, in Nature's joys, to warm like thine,
With eye to view her fascinating spells,
And dream entranced o'er each form divine,
Thy worth, Enthusiast, shall be cherish'd here,—
Thy name with him shall linger, and be dear.

LX.

TO AUTUMN.

Come, pensive Autumn, with thy clouds, and storms,
And falling leaves, and pastures lost to flowers;
A luscious charm hangs on thy faded forms,
More sweet than Summer in her loveliest hours,
Who, in her blooming uniform of green,
Delights with samely and continued joy:
But give me, Autumn, where thy hand hath been,
For there is wildness that can never cloy,—
The russet hue of fields left bare, and all
The tints of leaves and blossoms ere they fall.
In thy dull days of clouds a pleasure comes,
Wild music softens in thy hollow winds;
And in thy fading woods a beauty blooms,
That's more than dear to melancholy minds.

GLOSSARY.

Bitter-sweet, a species of nightshade.

Bumptious, consequential, conceited.

Buried moons, covered with vapour.

Chittering, the diminutive of chattering.

Chumbled, gnawed to pieces.

Closes, fields.

Crizzle, to crystal or crystallize: to freeze.

Croodling, crouching, shrinking.

Dithering, shivering.

Dossity, life or spirit.

Dotterel tree, a pollard tree.—" Old stumping trees in hedge-rows, that are headed every ten or twelve years for fire-wood." J. C.

Drowk, drooping.

Dyke, ditch.

Elting moulds, the soft ridges of fresh ploughed land.

Fin-weed, rest-harrow.

Fit to freeze, ready to freeze.

Flitting, departing.

Frit, frightened.

Gathering cream.—" This alludes to the cream gathering round the bucket as the milk-maid journeys home, which often betrays the loitering with a sweetheart." J. C. *Vide* Recollections after a Ramble.

Glegging, glancing.
Grains, the larger branches of trees.
Gulsh, to tear up with force.
High-lows, shoes covering the ankle.
Hirpling, limping.
Holm, a river island, or land which was formerly covered with water. *
Hurkles, crouches.
Jolls, rolls in walking.
Keck, hemlock.
Kid, a bundle of dry thorns.
Lady's laces, ribbon-grass.
Lambtoe, the kidney vetch, or lady's finger.
" Lawrence bids wages," invites to idleness.
Leggings, gaiters.
Long purples, purple loose-strife.
Morts, great numbers.
Noah's ark, a form of the clouds resembling this figure.
Pooty, a snail shell.
Puddock, the kite, or forked-winged buzzard.
Quirking, quick-turning.
Sen, provincialism for self—him*sen*, her*sen*.
Shanny, shame-faced.
Shooled, skulked.
'Skewing, starting aside.
Slop frock, a labourer's smock-frock.
Soodling, sauntering.
Stall'd, stuck fast.
Stoven, a stump.
Struttle, stickleback.
Stulp, a stump of a tree.

Sutherings, heavy sighings.

Swail, shade.

Swingle, a flail.

Swopping, pouncing.

Teem, pour out.

Toltering, hobbling.

Twilly-willy, woollen or stuff gown.

Water-blobs, the meadow-bught, or marsh-marigold.

Weals, stripes.

Whopstraws, a contemptuous appellation for countrymen.

Wood seers.—" Insects that lie in little white knots of spittle on the backs of leaves and flowers. How they come I don't know, but they are always seen plentiful in moist weather, and are one of the shepherd's weather-glasses. When the head of the insect is seen turned upward, it is said to betoken fine weather; when downward, on the contrary, wet may be expected. I think they turn to grasshoppers, and am almost certain, for I have watched them minutely." J. C.

THE END.

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